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ILLUSTRATION
BY SEAN MOORES
Stars and Stripes

Country upgrading facilities at Al Udeid Air Base to entice US families

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

Qatar wants to make Al Udeid Air Base more family friendly for U.S. forces in the hopes that the strategic military hub will be counted as one of the Pentagon's permanent overseas installations.

Qatar Defense Minister Khalid bin Mohammed al-Attiyah, speaking in Washington

on Tuesday, said a planned expansion would include 200 new family housing units for the American servicemembers and their families, new state-of-the-art schools and recreational facilities.

"The initiative aim(s) to serve the needs of the community living in Al Udeid and ease their transition and assimilation," al-Attiyah said.

SEE QATAR ON PAGE 7

Report: Half of post-9/11 vets aren't getting needed mental health care

By JOHN TOZZI
Bloomberg

About half of U.S. veterans who served during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq don't get the mental health care they need, according to a new report that recommends changes to improve the care delivered by the Veterans Affairs health system.

While many veterans receive good mental health care through the VA, it's inconsistent across the

system, according to the report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine — nonprofit institutions that inform public policy. The detailed, 439-page assessment of the VA's mental health services was ordered by Congress in 2013 and was completed by a committee of 18 academics.

Veterans who seek help for post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, depression or other mental health conditions

can be stymied by the VA's bureaucracy or short-staffed clinics and hospitals. Other factors such as distance, fear of revealing a mental health issue and a lack of social support might discourage veterans from seeking care at all.

The VA has had persistent problems trying to care for the more than 4 million servicemembers who have left duty since the start of the 17-year-old war in Afghanistan. Those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan — in an

all-volunteer military — often did multiple tours, with longer deployments and less time at home, compared with earlier conflicts, the report notes.

The stresses of that service have been evident for years. In 2014, the suicide rate among veterans was about 22 percent higher than among adults who had not served in the military, the VA reported in September.

SEE CARE ON PAGE 5



CARLOS BONGIOANNI/Stars and Stripes

VA Secretary David Shulkin has pledged to seek "major reform and a transformation" of the VA.

MILITARY

Colonel drugged in Bogota facing forced retirement

By CAROL ROSENBERG
Miami Herald

A military board has recommended forced retirement for a Marine colonel who was slipped a tranquilizer during a night on the town in Bogota, robbed and led around like a zombie before winding up in a Colombian hospital along with two other drugged Marine officers.

Col. Roger T. McDuffie, a Harrier pilot, was the most senior Marine in a South Florida unit on a Jan. 21-Feb. 4, 2017, field trip to the Colombian capital to map out U.S. Marine operations there. An initial, internal investigation conducted by the U.S. Southern Command Marine affiliate found some Marines broke curfew, ventured into a forbidden zone, consorted with prostitutes and brought some back to their hotel — only to be robbed of government property and hospitalized.

A board of inquiry, an administrative procedure less serious than a court-martial, considered the case Jan. 11 at Camp Lejeune, N.C., and found that McDuffie was guilty of “substandard performance” and “failure to demonstrate acceptable qualities of leadership required of an officer in the member’s grade,” said Gina Levy of the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command, which handled the investigation.

“The board recommended involuntary retirement, in grade,” she said, adding that a final determination of his case will be made by the Secretary of the Navy,

Richard V. Spencer, a 1976-81 Marine helicopter pilot turned investment banker. Three generals sat on McDuffie’s board.

The larger group of Marines started their night with drinks at the home of a Marine attache assigned to the U.S. embassy, according to an internal investigation obtained by the Miami Herald. They moved on to the Ugly American Bar & Grill, a bar popular with embassy workers for its hamburgers, and then hit the Colombian Pub, according to the report.

McDuffie’s attorney, Aaron Meyer, however, described the colonel as vindicated by the board. Meyer said he presented evidence to the board that showed the colonel was drugged while socializing in an approved bar, the Colombian Pub, in an area where the U.S. military was allowed to go in a night on the town, long before curfew. At the hearing, he told the panel of general officers it was as though the colonel was in a “sort of zombie-like state.”

Meyer said they were preyed upon by women, not prostitutes, from a gang that used spotters to target victims, “drug them, watch them, glom onto them when they are susceptible and ultimately rob them.” The lawyer said he called the chief toxicologist from the Armed Forces Medical Examiner’s Office to explain to the panel “the severe and universal effects of Benzodiazepine poisoning. Once you’re drugged by Benzodiazepine, all bets are off. You are completely susceptible and

malleable.”

The Drug Enforcement Administration says that, when lawfully used, Benzodiazepines are prescribed to treat insomnia and anxiety. It can cause amnesia. Trade name products include Valium, Xanax and Ativan. When used illicitly, the class of drug known as “benzos,” “downers,” and “tranks” are meant to “produce a euphoric effect” or “to facilitate sexual assault,” according to the DEA.

Once drugged, the lawyer said, McDuffie was “incapacitated in a state of 100 percent compliance ... and couldn’t possibly be held responsible by any common sense or a legal standard for being led around by them in the hours thereafter.”

An internal investigation described the drugged officers as being led into the hotel by the women in the early hours of the morning of their scheduled return — and led past other Marines mustering for their flight to Miami. Instead, McDuffie was robbed of iPhones, an iPad and cash — and landed in the hospital, the investigation found.

“There was zero intent to violate any governing orders, binge drink, or carouse with women,” the attorney said by email. “Colonel McDuffie, as the senior Marine present, failed in his broader duty to set the conditions that might have prevented such a drugging,” Meyer said. “Essentially, a Marine officer is responsible for everything that happens or fails to happen under his charge, and thus, in this case, despite the fact factors



Col. Roger T. McDuffie

affirmatively finding that there was zero intentional or knowing misconduct as previously claimed, Colonel McDuffie will be forced to retire.”

A separate board examined the case of Marine Maj. Andrew L. Mueller, described as a theater security cooperation planner during his time at the Southcom affiliate. Levy said the panel “substantiated misconduct,” and found Mueller violated Article 92 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice covering dereliction of duty, “but recommended retention and that the case be closed.”

The Secretary of Navy will similarly get to weigh in on whether to accept the board’s recommendation.

Levy said another Marine major implicated in the episode, Mauricio Saenz, was scheduled to have his board at Parris Island, South Carolina, last week. Instead he chose to quit the service without a hearing on whether he should be allowed to keep his commission.

“Maj. Saenz requested to resign, and it was approved,” Levy said Monday, adding that the Marine Forces Command approved the request and sent it to the Secretary of the Navy, who has the ultimate say.

Servicemember dies in incident

Stars and Stripes

A servicemember supporting the coalition fighting Islamic State died Wednesday in what the military said appears to be a non-combat incident.

Operation Inherent Resolve said on Thursday that the incident is under investigation. The name and nationality of the servicemember, as well as the circumstances surrounding the death, were being withheld.

It’s the second death of a servicemember serving with the coalition this year; both deaths resulted from apparent noncombat incidents.

375th Air Mobility Wing gets new commander

BELLEVILLE, Ill. — A colonel has been named to take over command of the 375th Air Mobility Wing at Scott Air Force Base weeks after the previous commander lost the job amid sexual misconduct allegations.

The (Belleville, Ill.) News-Democrat reported that Col. Leslie A. Maher will assume command Feb. 20.

Maher takes over for Col. W. Chris Buscher. In December, Lt. Gen. Giovanni Tuck named Buscher temporary commander when he announced that Col. John Howard was being investigated for alleged sexual misconduct and had been relieved of his command.

From The Associated Press

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PACIFIC

Diplomat move stirs fears of strike on N. Korea

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The Trump administration's decision to drop a prominent Washington-based academic as its choice to be the new ambassador to South Korea raised new concern about a possible so-called "bloody nose" strike against the nuclear-armed North.

Victor Cha was pulled from consideration for the position after he privately disagreed with President Donald Trump's

ANALYSIS policy on North Korea and threats to scrap the U.S.-South Korea free-trade agreement. The Washington Post reported Tuesday.

U.S. officials have confirmed the decision but not the reason. The move was seen as unusual because Washington already had informed South Korea that it intended to nominate Cha.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said Thursday that Washington informed it that the post won't be filled before the Olympic Games begin next week on the divided peninsula.

"The U.S. has sought our understanding through diplomatic channels that its efforts to send its ambassador to the South Korea's Pyeongchang Winter Olympics have not panned out as planned," spokesman Noh Kyuduk said during a regular news briefing.

"It has also asked for our understanding about the fact that the move was reported in media before it was properly discussed with the South," Noh added.

With uncertainty high over conflicting signals, critics and other observers seized on the news as evidence that Trump may be leaning toward a unilateral first strike.

In recent months, Trump has bounced between saying he'd be willing to talk to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and warning that he'll unleash "fire and fury" and "the most powerful" North if forced to defend the U.S. and its allies.

"An ominous signal," the Korea JoongAng Daily said in an editorial. "The last-minute withdrawal

reflects the Trump administration's interest in a military strike and abrogation of the trade pact."

The president's use of strong language about North Korea as well as the U.S. military and nuclear arsenal in his State of the Union speech stoked the speculation. He also stressed his plans to exert "maximum pressure" on the North, which refers to the diplomatic efforts.

The debate comes at a sensitive time, as South Korea is trying to maintain a diplomatic thaw with the North after the communist state agreed to participate in the Feb. 9-25 Winter Games.

The head of a South Korean opposition party said Cha's withdrawal from consideration shows that Trump is taking a harder line on North Korea than anticipated.

"If President Trump disapproved of even Victor Cha, who has been known as a hawk, we have to think seriously about its meaning," Rep. Yoo Seong-min was quoted as saying by the Yonhap News Agency. "The only way to prevent a U.S.-started war is persuasion through the Korea-U.S. alliance and sanctions and pressure against the North."

The move also appeared to expose a rift in the administration over the potential use of military action versus a continued reliance on an economic and diplomatic campaign to isolate the North Korean regime.

National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster has advocated preparing for military action, while Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has pressed for a diplomatic solution. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis has said military options are needed but should be used only if diplomacy fails.

Mattis and others have warned a war with North Korea would be "catastrophic," as tens of thousands of people would be killed even without the use of nuclear weapons.

North Korea has soldiers and conventional weapons massed on the heavily fortified border, which is about 35 miles from Seoul. The U.S. maintains some 28,500 servicemen in the South to try to prevent an invasion.

Cha, a professor at Georgetown University who served as director for Asian affairs on the National



Joseph Yun, right, the U.S. special representative for North Korea policy, speaks during a news conference Thursday in Tokyo.

US envoy for N. Korea: Military option available, but not close

Associated Press

TOKYO — The U.S.' special envoy for North Korea says America is not close to taking military action against the North.

Joseph Yun said Thursday that U.S. policy is to apply pressure and to leave the door open for dialogue while keeping all options open.

Yun said a military option is included, but "I

don't believe we are close to it."

Yun made the comments at a news conference in Tokyo after attending a meeting on North Korea held by a private think tank.

The two Koreas have resumed talks over the North's participation in this month's Winter Olympics in South Korea, prompting the U.S. and South Korea to postpone regular joint military exercises.

Security Council during George W. Bush's tenure, confirmed his view that a preventive strike would not be worth the risk of a full-fledged war.

Cha wrote in a commentary published Tuesday in the Post that the North poses a serious nuclear and missile threat.

"But the answer is not, as some Trump administration officials have suggested, a preventive military strike," he said. "Instead, there is a forceful military option available that can address the threat without escalating into a war that would likely kill tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of

Americans.

"When I was under consideration for a position in this administration, I shared some of these views," he added.

The ambassador's post, which has been vacant since Trump took office a year ago, requires Senate confirmation. The U.S. Embassy in Seoul is being led by charge d'affaires Marc Knapper, a career diplomat.

"It's a lengthy and thorough vetting process. Until a candidate is nominated, we have a highly experienced and well-respected charge d'affaires serving in Seoul," White House spokeswoman

Lindsay Walters said, according to The Associated Press.

The idea of a "bloody nose" strategy involving a limited strike designed to batter North Korea without provoking massive retaliation was raised earlier this year by the Wall Street Journal.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in's office said Trump denied in a phone call that he had such plans, but that was not included in the White House readout of the conversation.

Stars and Stripes reporter Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this report. game.kim@stripes.com Twitter: @kingame1

China's military wants more nukes to counter US stockpile

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

China's military is calling for the expansion of the country's nuclear weapons stockpile to counter what it sees as similar growth by the U.S., media reports said.

The comments appeared in Tuesday's People's Liberation Army Daily, the service's official newspaper, according to the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post.

While the PLA Daily said that China has enough nuclear weapons to prevent "bullying" by other nuclear powers, it needs to enhance the "strategic counterbalance in the region and maintain China's status as

a great power, and protect national security," the report said.

The Post said the commentary was likely directed at a draft of President Donald Trump's nuclear policy leaked in January to the Huffington Post. In that early version of the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, the president reportedly calls for adding low-yield nuclear weapons to the U.S. arsenal to increase deterrence, with the idea that America's current weapons are too powerful to use.

NBC News reported in October that Trump called for a "tenfold" increase in the nuclear arsenal during a meeting with high-ranking national security leaders last summer.

The review was commissioned after

Trump took office, and the final form of the document is expected any day now.

Toshiyuki Shikata, a former Japan Ground Self-Defense Force lieutenant general, scholar and defense expert, called China's commentary alarming but not new. The communist state has long sought to catch up with the U.S., which has a much larger nuclear arsenal.

"It is no surprise that China is calling for the expansion of its nuclear capability," Shikata said. "China wants to increase its nuclear capability to be on even ground with the U.S. The direction of their policy has not changed. It is alarming to Japan."

Shikata said China's push for more nuclear arms eventually could lead to more active talks about Japan possessing its own

nuclear weapons. However, changing the Japanese constitution to allow for offensive operations as a military deterrent and disarming North Korea are more pressing matters, he said.

Shikata believes Trump's reported push for smaller, more readily deployable nuclear weapons is meant as a deterrent for the Pacific and European theaters, which will help protect Japan from its nuclear-armed neighbors.

Experts across the spectrum resoundingly said this week that it is unlikely China would seek an arsenal comparable in size to that of the U.S., which some estimates put at 25 times larger.

burke.matt@stripes.com kusumoto.hana@stripes.com

PACIFIC

DOD: Missile defense test fails in Hawaii

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — A live-fire missile defense test conducted early Wednesday in Hawaii was unsuccessful, Pentagon officials acknowledged Thursday. “It did not meet our objectives,” said Dana White, a Pentagon spokeswoman. “But we learn something all the time with these tests. We learned something from this one, and we’ll continue to improve our capabilities.”

The missile was launched from the Pacific Missile Range Facility Barking Sands on the island of Kauai.

White said the Missile Defense Agency was probing test data to determine why the interceptor,

known as a Standard Missile 3 Block IIA, did not hit its target.

MDA did not issue a statement about the test result, which the agency had typically done after similar missile tests in the past. White declined to answer questions at the Pentagon about why the failure was not immediately acknowledged, referring any such inquiries to MDA officials.

MDA spokesman Mark Wright confirmed in a statement Wednesday only that the test had taken place.

“The Missile Defense Agency and U.S. Navy sailors manning the Aegis Ashore Missile Defense Test Complex conducted a live-fire missile flight test using a Standard-Missile 3 Block IIA missile launched from the Pacific

Missile Range Facility, Kauai, Hawaii, Wednesday morning,” Wright said.

Citing unidentified Pentagon sources, CNN reported the status of the test had not been announced in part because of the “sensitivities surrounding North Korea’s participation in the upcoming Olympic games and continuing tensions with leader Kim Jong Un.”

Leaders of the divided Korean Peninsula commenced discussions in early January after a hiatus of several years during which Pyongyang stepped up its testing of intercontinental ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons.

The thaw in relations between the two countries led to an announcement that North Korean athletes would attend the Winter

Olympics Feb. 9-25.

During a test in June, the United States fired the same missile from the USS John Paul Jones off the coast of Hawaii, but it failed to intercept its target, a medium-range ballistic missile.

In that instance, MDA issued a statement the day of the test announcing it had been unsuccessful.

MDA announced successful tests of the missile in February and August last year.

The United States, South Korea and Japan all possess Aegis-equipped warships, and the missile-defense capability is seen as more essential as North Korea appears to be getting closer to perfecting its nuclear weapon and ICBM programs.

The U.S. ability to launch such missiles from land is part of the Pentagon’s effort to develop a missile-defense grid covering the Pacific.

In Hawaii last week, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis told reporters that the way forward to a denuclearized Korean Peninsula would be led by diplomats, not the military. But any diplomacy is “backed up with military options available to ensure that our diplomats are understood to be speaking from a position of strength.”

Kim has at times identified Hawaii as a potential target of his regime’s missiles should hostilities begin.

Stars and Stripes reporter Corey Dickstein contributed to this story. olson.wyatt@stripes.com



PHOTOS BY MURHAN KING/Courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps

DJ Yone plays music at the Hangar E-Club grand opening Jan. 26 at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan.

Club offers a new place to hang in Iwakuni

By LEON COOK
Stars and Stripes

Two hundred and fifty Marines and sailors can fit onto the dance floor of a club that opened last week at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan.

The two-story Hangar E-Club for junior-enlisted personnel boasts a VIP lounge, poolroom and food court on the first floor, and four bars and a large dance area on the second, a Marine Corps statement said. It’s a joint venture between the Defense Policy Review Initiative and Marine Corps Community Services.

“What we are trying to provide here, that we haven’t been able to provide at other clubs, is an opportunity for service-members to experience those same types of club atmospheres that they might in town,” manager Moses Daniel said in the statement.

The Hangar — whose large dance floor is equipped with lasers, strobes and black lights — will host “big-named DJs from Okinawa, Tokyo, and other places around

Japan,” the statement said.

Patrons in the lounge and poolroom can order drinks and food such as Irish nachos, pulled-pork sandwiches and chicken gizzards without having to go upstairs, the statement said. The VIP lounge features leather seats, high-top tables, high-speed internet, charging stations and dashboards.

The food court, which is slated to open this spring, will include a Taco Bell and Burger King.

“This will help bring morale up, and that’s a big thing to everyone,” Daniel said in the statement. “It’s hard to be living in another country, and we all want to make it better for everyone.”

The Hangar replaces an establishment called The Landing Zone at Club Iwakuni that also catered to junior-enlisted personnel. Plans for that space have yet to be finalized, Daniel told Stars and Stripes on Thursday.

cook.leon@stripes.com
Twitter: @LeonCook12

Osprey squadron commander fired

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The commander of one of Okinawa’s two MV-22 Osprey squadrons has been fired nearly six months after a deadly crash off Australia’s eastern coast.

Marine Lt. Col. Bryan Swenson was removed from the helm of Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 265 on Jan. 26 by 1st Marine Aircraft Wing commanding gener-

al Brig. Gen. Thomas Weidley. Marine officials said in a statement sent to Stars and Stripes on Thursday.

Swenson lost the job because of a “loss of trust and confidence in his ability to lead his command,” the statement said. He was replaced on an interim basis by Maj. Christopher Denver, VMM-265’s executive officer.

Marine officials declined to provide further details about the firing.

Swenson led the unit during a deployment to Australia last year in which an Osprey crashed into the Coral Sea off Queensland’s coast, killing three Marines.

The Aug. 5 incident happened on the heels of Taliban Seaborn a monthlong bilateral exercise involving tens of thousands of troops, dozens of ships and hundreds of aircraft from several allied nations that wrapped up at the end of July.

It remains unclear what caused the crash because no report has been released.

The aircraft apparently smashed into the deck of the Navy’s amphibious transport dock USS Green Bay while trying to land with 26 Marines onboard.

It then slid into the sea, causing frantic rescue efforts that led to the recovery of 23 Marines.

First Lt. Benjamin Robert Cross, Cpl. Nathan Ordway and Pfc. Ruben Velasco were killed in the accident.

Their bodies were later recovered along with the aircraft.

Okinawa’s two Osprey squadrons — VMM-262 and VMM-265 — belong to the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. They alternate sea duty in support of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.

burke.matt@stripes.com



Hangar E-Club patrons grab a bite to eat during its grand opening.

MILITARY

Man sentenced in Germany in robbery foiled by US veteran

Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — A would-be casino robber foiled by a former U.S. soldier was sentenced to three years and three months in prison for attempted armed robbery on Tuesday.

The 48-year-old perpetrator walked into a gambling hall wearing a ski mask and holding a handgun in Heidsieffels, located near a former U.S. base in Wuerzburg, the Main Post newspaper reported.

The U.S. veteran, who worked at the casino, told the court that the armed robber ordered him to go to the cash till. "I was afraid that it was a real gun. It looked like a .22 revolver," the former soldier said.

Neither the veteran nor the robber was identified, in keeping with German privacy laws.

The former soldier told the court that the situation reminded him of his experiences serving in Iraq.

When the robber turned away for a moment, the ex-servicemember slammed him to the ground, striking him so hard that he broke one of the robber's cheekbones, the Main Post said.

On the night of the robbery, the veteran was witness to his wife, who also was employed at the casino, the newspaper said. He testified that his wife had quit her job because she feared another robbery.

news@stripes.com

Care: Report says parking, qualified staff can be hurdles

FROM FRONT PAGE

While some of the VA's larger difficulties with providing care have been widely reported, the new report reveals some lesser-known hurdles. Researchers found that one seemingly mundane issue — parking — was a problem at almost all of the medical centers they visited. Veterans seeking mental health care were often late for appointments and stressed from looking for a spot. "You spend the first 15 minutes diffusing [sic] them from the frustration with the parking situation," one unidentified VA clinician in San Diego told the researchers. "You haven't even started the therapy. The parking is a nightmare."

Qualified staff is hard to find in rural areas. "There's a lot of burnout," she said.

There's no quick fix to the problems faced by the VA in providing sufficient mental health services. Breaking down barriers to care will require reaching out to veterans and streamlining application processes, as well as investments in the VA workforce, facilities and technology, according to the report.

If the VA can better connect patients in need with high-quality mental health care, it could serve as an example for the rest of the country, the authors wrote. The VA "is positioned to inform and influence how mental health care services are provided more broadly in the U.S.," the report states.

The committee recommended the VA develop a plan to deliver reliable, high-quality mental health care throughout its system in three years to five years.

That time frame is "an optimistic goal," said Emily Blair, manager of military and veterans policy at the National Alliance on Mental Illness, a nonprofit advocacy group.

Veterans often are confused as to how to get benefits, unsure whether they're eligible or frustrated by red tape, she said. The experience varies widely, depending on where veterans live. Particularly in rural areas, it can be difficult for the VA to hire qualified staff. Years of negative headlines following the scandal over wait times at a Phoenix facility in 2014 have exacerbated recruiting challenges, Blair said. "There's a lot of burnout," she said.

A VA spokesperson didn't respond to an email seeking comment on Wednesday's report. Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin, the former health-care executive whom President Trump picked to lead the agency, has pledged to seek "major reform and a transformation" of the VA. Shulkin, a medical doctor, joined the agency as under secretary for health during the Obama administration in 2015.

The Trump administration has said it's moving to expand veterans' access to mental health. Trump signed an executive order on Jan. 9, giving military and VA officials 60 days to develop a plan to give people leaving the armed forces "seamless access to mental health treatment and suicide prevention" in the year following their service.

About 265,000 servicemembers transition out each year, Blair said. The government hasn't specified how those additional services would be funded.

Army to pay \$4M to families of Wash. man, girlfriend killed by extremists

By MIKE CARTER
The Seattle Times

The Army has agreed to pay \$4 million to settle a lawsuit by the families of a Marysville, Wash., man and his girlfriend, who were killed in 2011 by a group of renegade soldiers — led by another Washington man — intent on overthrowing the government and starting a race war.

The unusual settlement, reached after months of mediation, includes \$1.7 million for the family of Michael Roark, a former Marysville soldier who became entangled with the group of extremist soldiers while stationed at Fort Stewart, Ga. Roark was killed by the group of soldiers — along with his 17-year-old girl-

friend, Tiffany York — because the extremist soldiers worried they couldn't trust him.

The killings were ordered by the leader of the group, Army Pvt. Isaac Aguigui, of Chelan.

Aguigui is serving life without parole for the murder of his pregnant wife, an Army sergeant whom he strangled. He then used the \$500,000 the military gave him in death benefits to finance plans that included poisoning Washington's apple crop, bombing a public park in Savannah, Ga., and assassinating then-President Barack Obama.

The settlement is striking because the Army already had succeeded in having the claims filed by Roark's parents — Tracy Jahr, of Marysville, and Brett Roark, of

Daytona Beach, Fla. — dismissed in 2016. U.S. District Court Judge Barbara Rothstein said she had no choice but to comply with a doctrine that prevents the military from being sued for injuries arising from military service.

However, in allowing the York case to trial, Rothstein said the jury in that case would be told that both the Army and the FBI knew Aguigui posed a "substantial risk" to the public at least two months before Roark and York were killed, but did nothing.

The case was settled earlier this month.

The Army, in a pair of settlement stipulations, admitted no liability or blame. The Army did not respond to a request for comment.

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EUROPE

Russian military says it will continue tailing US aircraft

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

Russia's Defense Ministry said Thursday that it would continue to tail U.S. aircraft flying near its territory over the Black Sea and suggested the Navy give its pilots updated maps showing the Crimean Peninsula within Russian borders.

U.S. Naval Forces Europe reported on Monday that a Russian fighter flew within 5 feet of an EP-3 reconnaissance plane, which was deemed an unsafe maneuver. The incident occurred over international airspace, the Navy said.

Russia on Thursday said the U.S. plane was flying near the Crimean Peninsula, which Moscow annexed from Ukraine in 2014, sparking Cold War-like tensions with the West.

"The Russian military believes that when it dispatches air pilots on reconnaissance missions in this part of the Black Sea the United States should keep in mind that they will encounter Russian fighters, and not Ukrainian partners," said the Russian Defense Ministry, as quoted by state media. "Or supply all crews with updated maps showing the correct borders of Russia's airspace."

In November, a Russian fighter intercepted a Navy P-8 aircraft in a similar incident over the Black Sea, where close air encounters between Russia and the U.S. have become commonplace.

In a message to the Navy's 6th Fleet, the Russian Defense Ministry issued a "reminder" that "Crimea is an integral part of Russia."

The U.S. military and State Department blamed Russia for engaging in maneuvers that increase the risk of miscalculation and midair collisions.

"The United States notes with the highest level of concern the latest incident of unsafe Russian



Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

In this image made from video, a Russian Su-27 fighter jet buzzes a U.S. Navy EP-3 Aries over the Black Sea on Monday.

military practices," State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said Tuesday. "While the U.S. aircraft was operating under international law, the Russian side

was flagrantly violating existing agreements and international law."

vandiver.john@stripes.com
Twitter: @john_vandiver

Space agencies continue to gather information on flight emissions

By MIKE KELLER
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — NASA and the German Aerospace Center flew across the country on Wednesday to gather data that scientists hope will help lessen the impact of flight emissions on ground temperatures.

Research scientists from both agencies flew on NASA's DC-8 Airborne Science Laboratory to record air sample measurements taken from an array of sensors and intake valves on the "flying laboratory."

The DC-8 flew in commercial flight corridors to test persistent condensation trails, or contrails, of various aircraft, engine types and fuel combinations.

Contrails form in aircraft exhaust at high altitudes because of low temperatures. These clouds of ice and soot create lingering cloud layers that can trap heat reflected from the earth's surface, which then warms the ground at night.

The agencies are conducting flights in tandem through the skies over Europe to see how traditional jet fuel blended with alternative fuels changes contrails and potentially mitigates their environmental impact.

keller.mike@stripes.com



NASA scientist Jenny Ly records air sample measurements from sensors on NASA's Airborne Science Laboratory during a flight over Germany on Wednesday.



Above: Bruce Anderson, senior research scientist at NASA's Langley Research Center, top center, reviews the day's mission with crewmembers and scientists during a preflight briefing Wednesday after a mission at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

Left: NASA's DC-8 Airborne Science Laboratory is inspected Wednesday after a mission at Ramstein Air Base.

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL B. KELLER/
Stars and Stripes

WAR/MIDEAST

US accuses Syria of producing new chemical weapons

By JOSH LEDERMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration on Thursday accused Syrian President Bashar Assad's government of producing and using new chemical weapons despite committing to abolish its program in 2013, and insisted the world must find a way to stop it.

Raising the alarm about the chemical threat amid Syria's long civil war, U.S. officials said Syrian government and Islamic State continue to use such weapons, although the militants' arms are said to be more rudimentary.

The officials said it was "highly likely" that Assad kept a hidden stockpile of weapons after 2013, but that recent alleged attacks also suggested an "evolving" program to make "new kinds of weapons" — either to improve their military capability or to escape international accountability.

President Donald Trump hasn't ruled out the possibility of additional military action to deter attacks or punish Assad, according to the officials, who weren't authorized to speak on the record and briefed reporters on condition of anonymity. Years of efforts by two U.S. presidents have failed to end the harrowing reports on chemical weapons use in Syria.

Under President Barack Obama, the United States stopped short of striking Assad's forces in response but brokered a deal with Russia to end Syria's its stockpiles. After another alleged attack in April 2017, Trump ordered a retaliatory missile strike, but 10 months later, the U.S. and international observers say the weapons are still used.

Syria's Kurds push US to stop Turkish assault

Associated Press

BEIRUT — Syria's Kurdish militia is growing frustrated with its patron, the U.S., and is pressing it to do more to stop Turkey's assault on a key stronghold in Syria.

The issue reflects a deeper concern among the Kurds over their alliance with the Americans, which proved vital to defeating Islamic State in Syria. The Kurds fear that ultimately they and their dream of self-rule will be the losers in the big powers' play over influence in Syria.

Already the U.S. is in a tough spot, juggling between the interests of the Kurds, its only ally in war-torn Syria, and its relations with Turkey, a key NATO ally. The Kurdish militia views defending the Kurdish enclave of Afrin as an existential fight to preserve their autonomy.

Afrin has major significance. It's

More recent attacks have involved both chlorine, which has nonchemical uses and is easier to acquire, and the more sophisticated chemical sarin, the officials said. They said that in recent years, Assad has adjusted his tactics to reduce the chances that attacks will be attributed to his forces.

That has made evidence collection more difficult, though the U.S. believes it has a firm understanding of the extent of chemical use in Syria through a combination of intelligence, sample testing by third countries, and social media and other open-source information, the officials said.

Though ISIS no longer controls large parts of Syria or Iraq, the officials said the extremist group continues to use sulfur mustard, via artillery shells, and chlorine, delivered by improvised explosive devices. The officials noted that the underlying chemicals are easy to acquire or produce and said the U.S. does not believe ISIS has gotten ahead of military stockpiles in either Iraq or Syria.

Reports of chemical attacks have continued to stream in from Syria, including as recently as Thursday, when rescue workers in the rebel-held Damascus suburb of Douma reported what they described as a suspected chlorine gas attack that injured a number of civilians. The opposition-run Ghouta Media Center reported in a posting on its Facebook page that three people were killed and dozens suffered shortness of breath as a result of surface-to-surface missiles, some of them carrying chlorine gas.

The reports could not be independently verified.

one of the first Kurdish areas to rise up against President Bashar Assad and back self-rule, a base for senior fighters who pioneered the alliance with the U.S. and a key link in their efforts to form a contiguous entity along Turkey's border. The offensive, which began Jan. 20, has so far killed more than 60 civilians and dozens of fighters on both sides.

"How can they stand by and watch?" Aldar Khalil, a senior Kurdish politician, said of the U.S.-led coalition against ISIS. "We consider their unclear and indecisive positions as a source of concern."

The fight for Afrin puts Washington in a bind with few good options. The Americans have little leverage and no troops in Afrin. In Washington, officials rejected the notion that the United States hasn't tried hard enough to rein in Turkey.



PHIL SPECK/Courtesy of the U.S. Air National Guard

Airmen work on a new structure for vehicle maintenance in December at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar. Qatar wants to make the air base more family friendly for U.S. forces.

Qatar: Upgrades could enhance US relationship

FROM FRONT PAGE

His comments came during a meeting with Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, both of whom touted the long-standing military alliance with Qatar.

The base has served as the primary operations hub for the campaign against Islamic State and played a crucial role in the Iraq War.

Expanding the welcome mat for U.S. forces at Al Udeid is one way Doha can enhance its relationship with Washington at a time when Qatar is increasingly isolated.

In June, Saudi Arabia and a contingent of other Gulf states imposed an economic blockade on Qatar in connection with persistent complaints that it secretly supported terrorist groups.

Soon after the blockade was announced, President Donald Trump issued a tweet that appeared to take Saudi Arabia's side

in the feud.

Since then, the U.S. has not signaled any interest in pivoting away from Al Udeid.

Tillerson said Tuesday that Qatar had recently moved to improve efforts at combating terrorism, including increased sharing of information on terrorists and those who finance them.

"We have participated in counterterrorism technical training and taken steps to improve aviation security," he said. "We look forward to building on this foundation and implementing (the) next steps."

The U.S. began operating out of Al Udeid in 2001. While it is not a secret location, for years the Pentagon avoided calling the facility by name and drawing attention to operations there because of Qatar's sensitivities.

That has changed in recent years, and now Qatar touts the American presence and the

roughly 11,000 troops who operate at Al Udeid.

The quality of some facilities at Al Udeid was at one point a cause of concern. In 2016, complaints from troops about moldy showers and temporary living quarters got the attention of Congress, which pressured military officials to remedy the situation.

At an event Sunday at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, al-Attiahy said he wanted 200 more housing units for military families so the base "will very soon become a family-oriented place for our American friends."

"Colleagues in the U.S. Department of Defense are reluctant to mention the word permanent, but we are working from our side to make it permanent," al-Attiahy said.

vandiver.john@stripes.com
Twitter: @john_vandiver

Afghan official says US drone kills 26 Taliban

KABUL, Afghanistan — An Afghan official says two U.S. drone strikes this week hit a building where dozens of Taliban were meeting in the southeastern province of Ghazni, killing 26 insurgents and wounding 22.

Afrif Noori, a provincial spokesman, says the drone assault was carried out Tuesday during an offensive in Ghazni province's Andar district where the U.S. military came to the aid of Afghan security forces battling the Taliban.

He says among those killed was a senior commander, known only as Aghani, who ran the insurgency in Ghazni province. The first U.S. drone strike hit the building, the second struck an hour later after more Taliban had gathered at the scene.

Afghanistan: Attackers trained in Pakistan

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghanistan has given neighboring Pakistan confessions and other proof showing that the military who carried out a recent series of

attacks were trained in Pakistan and that Taliban leaders there are allowed to roam freely, Afghan officials said Thursday.

Interior Minister Wais Ahmed Barmak told a news conference the evidence was presented at a meeting a day earlier in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad. Afghanistan's spy chief, Masoom Stanekzai, also attended the meeting, along with senior Pakistani military and intelligence officials.

Stanekzai, addressing the same news conference, said Afghanistan laid out its proof and asked Pakistan to take action to prevent further attacks. There was no immediate comment from Pakistan,

which has expressed condolences over the recent attacks. A Pakistani delegation is due in Kabul on Saturday, said Stanekzai.

Nearly 200 people have been killed over the past month in attacks claimed by the Taliban and a rival Islamic State affiliate. Afghan authorities say they detained one of the gunmen who attacked a military academy Monday, killing 11 people in an assault claimed by ISIS.

"The Taliban, with these actions, cannot call themselves a political organization," Stanekzai said. "They are a terrorist organization."

From The Associated Press

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NATION

Trump nears decision on GOP memo on FBI

By MARY CLARE JALANICK,
ZEKE MILLER and CHAD DAY
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is close to making a decision on whether to release a classified Republican memo alleging misconduct by the FBI in its investigation into potential ties between Russia and Trump's 2016 campaign. Democrats and the Justice Department have urged him to block the document's disclosure.

White House spokesman Raj Shah said he expected a decision to be made "pretty soon" on whether to halt the House Intelligence Committee from releasing the memo. The panel voted along party lines Monday to release it, and Trump had five days to object. If he doesn't object, then Congress can release it.

The president has read and been briefed on the memo, according to a senior administration official. The official was not authorized to be quoted about private deliberations and spoke on condition of anonymity. Trump is expected to approve the release of the memo as soon as Thursday.

Trump has said he wants the

memo released despite the objections of the FBI and the Justice Department. The FBI declared Wednesday that it has "grave concerns" about the accuracy of the classified memo, which was written as part of an effort to reveal what Republicans say are surveillance abuses by the FBI and the Justice Department in the early stages of the investigation into potential ties between Russia and the 2016 Trump presidential campaign.

Senior FBI officials have also made direct appeals to the White House, warning that it could set a dangerous precedent.

Democrats made a last-ditch effort Wednesday evening to stop the memo's release, saying it had been "secretly altered" by the Republicans who wrote it. California Rep. Adam Schiff said in a letter to House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes, R-Calif., that committee Democrats had discovered changes that were made after the Monday vote.

"The White House has therefore been reviewing a document since Monday night that the committee never approved for public release," Schiff said in the letter.

Schiff asked Nunes for another vote on the memo, but Republicans didn't appear to waver. A spokesman for Nunes said the committee vote was "procedurally sound," and that "to suggest otherwise is a bizarre distraction from the abuses detailed in the memo, which the public will hopefully soon be able to read for themselves."

The FBI's stance means that Trump, by allowing the memo's release, would be openly defying his own FBI director by continuing to push for its disclosure. It also suggests a clear willingness by FBI Director Christopher Wray, who in the early stretch of his tenure has been notably low-key, to challenge a president who just months ago fired his predecessor, James Comey.

The FBI statement came the day after Trump was overhauled by television cameras telling a congressman that he "100 percent" supported release of the four-page memo.

House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi and Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer are pressuring Speaker Paul Ryan to stop the memo's release, and Pe-



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes, R-Calif., is an ally of President Donald Trump and a critic of the Justice Department.

losi on Thursday called for Nunes to be removed as chairman of the intelligence panel. She says Nunes took "deliberately dishonest actions" by altering a classified GOP-written memo on the investigation into Russia's election influence.

Democrats have called the memo a "cherry-picked" list of

GOP talking points that attempts to distract from the committee's own investigation into Russian meddling in the election that sent Trump to the White House. They have prepared their own memo in response, but Republicans voted to block its immediate public release.

Reaction to Trump immigration offer casts doubt on doing a deal

By ALAN FRAM and JILL COLVIN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's State of the Union offer of a "down-the-middle compromise" on immigration did nothing to move Republicans and Democrats closer to a deal, as Democrats accused the president of lacing his speech with racially charged remarks and Republicans dug in on their demands.

The reaction to Trump's high-profile overture suggested both parties were settling into a protracted tug-of-war. The standoff left serious doubt whether the two sides could reach an election-year pact to protect hundreds of thousands of young immigrants from deportation, sharpen border security and take other steps to curb immigration.

"If the deadline is Feb. 8, we're not going to make it," No. 2 House Democratic leader Steny Hoyer, of Maryland, said Wednesday, noting a likelihood of presidential government funding to avoid another shutdown.

"It's going to take work for us to build a consensus," Rep. Steve Scalise, R-La., the House GOP vote counter, said in an interview Tuesday. Scalise noted that Republicans "wax and wane" to craft tax legislation last year.

Trump complained early Thursday that "the Democrats are doing nothing about DACA."

"They Resist, Blame, Complain and Obstruct — and do nothing. Start pushing Nancy Pelosi and the Dems to work out a DACA fix. NOW!" the president tweeted.

Earlier this month, Senate Democrats looking to pressure Republicans to reach an immigration deal forced a three-day federal shutdown. While many Democrats have little appetite to repeat that strategy, party leaders have yet to indicate if they'll release budget legislation to move forward without an immigration accord.



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Minority Whip Steny Hoyer, D-Md., listen to the State of the Union address Tuesday in Washington.

The tone of the immigration debate, already tready, seemed to worsen after Trump asserted Tuesday night that "open borders have allowed drugs and gangs to pour into our most vulnerable communities" and let millions of immigrants "compete for jobs and wages against the poorest Americans."

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said Wednesday that Trump used "insulting words of ignorance and prejudice," Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham, D-N.M., who leads the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, said the remarks were "meant to enflame tensions about immigrants" and would stir up Trump's conservative base but damage talks.

Republicans said Democrats are not making serious offers as they bargain over Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, the Obama-era program that's shielded immigrants in the U.S. illegally who were brought here as children.

Schumer questions US meeting with 2 cited Russian spy chiefs

By DEB RIECHMANN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrats want to know why the Trump administration allowed two Russian spy chiefs under U.S. and European sanctions to meet last week in Washington with American intelligence officials.

Russia's U.S. ambassador said Sergei Naryshkin, head of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service, was in the United States to discuss counterterrorism with his American counterparts.

Naryshkin was accompanied at the meeting in Washington by Alexander Bortnikov, who directs the top KGB successor agency known as the Federal Security Service, according to two U.S. officials, who were not authorized to disclose the information and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The two Russian intelligence officials were sanctioned in 2014 in response to Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine and alleged cyberattacks over Russian interference by the European Union.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said the timing of the meeting is suspicious because it came just days before the Trump administration decided not to issue new sanctions against Russian politicians and oligarchs. He released a letter early Thursday demanding that Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats disclose details of the meeting by Feb. 9.

Schumer said sanctions against Naryshkin impose severe financial penalties and prohibit his entry into the U.S. without a waiver.

The State Department declined to comment, saying via records are confidential by law.

The CIA would not confirm the meetings, saying only that any interactions with foreign intelligence officials would have been conducted in accordance with U.S.

‘Did the U.S. officials who met with Mr. Naryshkin raise Russia’s interference in the 2016 elections? If not, why was this not raised? If raised, what was his response?’

Sen. Chuck Schumer
D-N.Y.

law and in consultation with appropriate departments and agencies. Such meetings might occur more often than is publicly known.

Government agencies at times need to secure waivers to get certain individuals into the country, according to a U.S. official, who agreed to discuss the process only on condition of anonymity. The official said law enforcement agencies, for instance, might need a waiver to allow a witness in an arms trafficking case to travel to the U.S. Other U.S. agencies might need to speak with officials from an enemy nation.

Schumer wants to know why the visit was allowed, who approved it, which other Russian officials were in the delegation and whether they also are under sanction. Schumer also asked Coats to disclose what was discussed at the meetings and whether the Russians also met with Trump administration officials at the White House, State or Defense departments or the National Security Council.

"Did the U.S. officials who met with Mr. Naryshkin raise Russia's interference in the 2016 elections? If not, why was this not raised? If raised, what was his response?" Schumer asked.

NATION

Rant by teacher causes a firestorm

By ELI ROSENBERG
AND J. FREEDOM DU LAC
The Washington Post

White House Chief of Staff John F. Kelly offered a blunt reaction Wednesday to a Southern California teacher's disparaging comments about American troops.

Speaking on Fox News Radio, Kelly, a retired four-star general, listened to Gregory Salcido's viral classroom rant—in which the high school teacher and Pico Rivera city councilman called members of the military “the lowest of our low”—and said: “Well, I think the guy ought to go to hell. I just hope he enjoys the liberties and the lifestyles that we fought for.”

Salcido has become the subject of harsh criticism—and, he says, violent threats—over a video in which he's heard insulting members of the military fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. The video was reportedly taken during a history class Salcido was teaching at El Rancho High School as he launched into a rant about how long the wars overseas have dragged on.

“Because we have a bunch of dumb—s over there,” Salcido said in the video, which is peppered with profanity. “Think about the people who you know who are over there. Your freaking stupid Uncle Louie or whatever. They're dumb—s. They're not like high-level thinkers, they're not academic people, they're not intellectual people. They're the lowest of our low.”

Amid mounting backlash—including calls for his firing—Salcido has been condemned by his fellow council members and placed on administrative leave by the school district, whose superintendent has said “there will be disciplinary measures taken.”

A special Tuesday night school board meeting in Pico Rivera, a small city on the outskirts of Los Angeles, was “standing room only,” according to a reporter who covered it, and some attendees wore military garb or brought U.S. flags. “Several people in the audience wanted to speak directly to why Salcido, 49, has not been fired,” the *Whittier Daily News* reported.

According to a reporter who was not among the two items on the agenda, and El Rancho Unified School District Board President Aurora Villon said near the start of the meeting that “we will not entertain public comments that are not part of our agenda. So at this point, we will move on.”

That did not sit well with the attendees, who wanted to talk about Salcido.

“I don't understand why it's not going to be a topic of discussion,” said one attendee in a *Navy* hoodie. “This is why you have so many



Teacher Gregory Salcido stands in front of El Rancho High School in Pico Rivera, Calif., in 2010. Salcido was surreptitiously recorded making disparaging remarks about the U.S. military in a classroom.

“I think the guy ought to go to hell. I just hope he enjoys the liberties and the lifestyles that we fought for.”

John F. Kelly

White House chief of staff and retired four-star general



people here. ... You should allow us to speak.”

Meeting attendees cheered. “At this point we're going to move on,” Villon said.

People weren't having it, slamming Salcido and berating the board. “As your elected officials, you need to give us an opportunity to talk, to discuss this,” Villon pleaded, before noting that comments about Salcido will be welcome at the school board's next regular meeting, Tuesday at Pico Rivera City Hall. The *Daily News* wrote that Los Angeles County Sheriff's officials “are anticipating huge crowds” there and at the Pico Rivera City Council meeting a week later.

There is also a Friday protest being organized through Facebook: “Remove Councilman Gregory Salcido from El Rancho High School.”

The Salcido video appears to have been surreptitiously recorded. It was published Friday on Facebook by a woman who tagged the post from Connecticut and said the student who filmed it was a friend's son. The student who recorded the video is a 17-year-old El Rancho High senior whose father and two uncles are veterans, according to the *San Gabriel Valley Tribune*. He appears to be wearing a Marines sweatshirt.

“So, if you join the military, it's because you had no other options,” Salcido is heard saying. “It's because you didn't take care of business academically, because your parents didn't love you enough to

push you and then you didn't love yourself enough to push yourself.”

“It was so disrespectful to my dad with my uncles and all veterans and those still in the military,” the student told the newspaper over the weekend, noting at the time that “he wished to remain anonymous because he doesn't want any repercussions from friends who support Salcido.”

But on Monday, CW affiliate KTLA identified the student as Victor Quinonez, who told the station that he hopes to join the Marines—like his father.

Quinonez's mother, Karen Rodriguez, told KTLA that Salcido should lose his teaching job.

“I don't think that somebody with that mentality—and not being able to refrain themselves from the things that they express about—should be ... in a school environment,” she told the station.

Salcido, KTLA reported, also made her son “stand in front of the class to justify why he wants to become a Marine after graduating this year.” Said the boy's father, Vincent: “It's not ... about freedom of speech. That's fine. [Salcido] can say what he wants. But to say it to the youth is wrong. To bully my son is wrong, to discriminate against people who want to be in the military is wrong.”

The video was taken in a history class last month.

The El Rancho Unified School District has not responded to requests for comment.

“One thing we are telling people for sure is that the commitment of

the board and the superintendent and the staff is to really get to the bottom of this for the community,” Superintendent Karling Aguilera-Fort told the *Whittier Daily News*.

The *Daily News* also reported that “security was stepped up at City Hall and the school, and phones rang off the hook at both sites with callers demanding [Salcido] resign both posts.” Aguilera-Fort, along with school board officials and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Capt. Pat Valdez, “met with school faculty to discuss safety issues in light of the controversy and how to move forward teaching students.”

Salcido did not return a request for comment sent to the email address on his city biography page, which said he was a graduate of El Rancho High School and has served as the city's mayor three times. He is a member of the city's History and Heritage Society Committee.

He told the Los Angeles Times that he had been receiving threats over the video. Valdez told the *Tribune* that he had ordered patrols of Salcido's home. He also sent deputies to the home of the student who recorded the teacher's rant.

In the video, Salcido is heard speaking in loaded terms about foes of the United States, saying the military was losing to “dudes wearing freaking robes and chancals [flip-flops]” in the Middle East.

“The data is in; we don't have a good military,” he said.

He also criticized military recruiters in public schools.

“It's a lie that our military is freaking bitching,” he said. “Why, after the national anthem, do we have a killing machine fly over the freaking stadium? You know, the stealth bomber comes in. Everybody's all like, ‘Yeah.’ Like, ‘That's what we kill people with, woo.’ Why would that be something we celebrate?”

A Facebook page that appeared to be Salcido's showed a long list of angry, abusive and vaguely threatening comments.

Lawmakers demand answers on fitness apps

By CRAIG TIMBERG
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Congressional Democrats on Wednesday called on Strava, the maker of a popular fitness app, to explain why it published a global “heat map” online that inadvertently highlighted the locations of sensitive government facilities throughout the world by revealing the movements of millions of users.

New Jersey Rep. Frank Pallone Jr., the top Democrat on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, demanded that Strava Chief Executive Officer James Quarles explain why it published the heat map, what privacy protections it offered users, how it secures data from hackers and whether the company has changed its policies since news of the heat map broke over the weekend.

“The increasing popularity of fitness trackers and other wearable technology has raised serious questions about the types of data they collect and share and the degree to which consumers control their own personal information,” said the letter, which eight committee Democrats co-signed.

“The data these devices collect reveals users’ precise locations, daily activities, and health information.... In this case, Strava made no attempt to secure information, and instead published location information on the internet for anyone to see.”

A Strava spokesman did not immediately respond to a request for comment about the letter on Wednesday.

News reports on Strava prompted a U.S. military review this week of the fitness devices and other telecommunications equipment that can pinpoint the locations of users in sensitive locations. The news also underscored growing concerns about the privacy of fitness apps, as experts found ways to use the Strava app to find the names and photographs of individual users, along with the biking and jogging routes they used.

Such user data, along with military supply and convoy routes, are potentially valuable information to adversaries and those who might plan attacks on U.S. forces, experts said.

Previously, Strava has urged its users to review the privacy settings and said it was working with government and military officials to address concerns about the location of sensitive facilities.

The controversy also has highlighted concerns about ordinary users of fitness tracking devices and similar apps on smartphones, as well as the growing importance of location data generally to Silicon Valley.

The letter from Congressional Democrats also indicates an interest in how privacy settings are established by default, meaning for users who don't alter them before using.

NATION



ZACK WEISGRAS, THE (CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA.) DAILY PROGRESS/AP

Emergency personnel work Wednesday at the scene of a train crash involving a garbage truck and an Amtrak passenger train carrying dozens of GOP lawmakers in Crozet, Va.

GOP lawmakers put medical skills to work after train crash

BY ALAN FRAM
AND HEIDI BROWN
Associated Press

CROZET, Va. — Republican members of Congress with medical experience put their skills to work after a train carrying dozens of them crashed into a garbage truck in rural Virginia, killing one person in the truck and injuring others.

The congressmen were on their way to a strategy retreat in the countryside when the collision occurred about 11:20 a.m. Wednesday in Crozet, about 125 miles southwest of Washington.

No serious injuries were reported aboard the chartered Amtrak train, which set out from the nation's capital with lawmakers' family members and staff for the luxury Greenbrier resort in White Sulphur Springs, W.Va. At least two other people in the truck were reported seriously hurt.

Rep. James Comer, of Kentucky, said about 100 Republican lawmakers were on the train when the crash made him jump out of his seat.

"I looked out the side of the window and then I could see a truck, just in pieces out the side of the window," Comer said. He said Capitol police officers quickly jumped off the train but came back and asked for any doctors to help.

Florida Rep. Neal Dunn, a former Army surgeon, said he and other lawmakers who are doctors joined other passengers who are nurses or paramedics and jumped out with the basic medical gear they had. They broke into three teams to help the injured people in the truck, he said.

"The first gentleman was somebody who had really, really, really devastating injuries. We did try to resuscitate, but ultimately you had to realize it wasn't possible,"

Dunn said.

The Albemarle County Police Department identified the passenger killed as Christopher Foley, 28, of Louisiana County.

Dunn said another man in the truck was critically injured and a third was seriously hurt.

Sen. Bill Cassidy, of Louisiana, and his wife, both doctors, were among those who came to the rescue. He said he helped a man from the truck who was badly injured.

"My role was quite simple: I picked up my feet so the blood in his feet would go to his heart and his brain," Cassidy said.

Sen. Jeff Flake, of Arizona, said seeing the lawmakers tending to the injured reminded him of the shooting of Rep. Steve Scalise at a GOP baseball practice last June.

"I thought then I never want to experience a day like this again," Flake said. "Unfortunately, it came too soon."

Authorities gave no details on the cause of the wreck, which took place at a crossing protected by gates, flashing lights, bells and warning signs. The National Transportation Safety Board sent a team to investigate and will spend several days at the site, spokesman Earl Weener said Wednesday night.

Benny Layne, on whose property the truck landed, said the crossing arms had been known to malfunction, sometimes coming down even though no train was approaching. Sometimes, he said, they stayed down for hours.

He said motorists would get out of their cars to help guide other motorists around the malfunctioning arms so they could cross the tracks.

"A guy was up here just yesterday or the day before taking a look at them," he said.

Carrie Brown, human re-

sources manager at Buckingham Branch Railroad, which leases the stretch of track and is responsible for maintenance, said she was unaware of any problems with equipment at the crossing. At a Wednesday night news conference, Weener said signal experts would be looking at the safety of the crossing.

Officials gave varying figures on the number hurt. But Amtrak said two crewmembers and three passengers were taken to a hospital with minor injuries.

Minnesota Rep. Jason Lewis' staff tweeted that the first-term congressman was among those taken to the hospital and later was discharged after suffering a concussion. Others aboard the train reported bumps, bruises and sore joints.

The GOP policy retreat, an annual event, was scheduled to last three days and to feature speeches from President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence. By early afternoon, lawmakers were boarding buses to resume their trip.

Later Wednesday, Pence told Republicans at the party retreat that he knows "it's been a harrowing day for all of you." Pence, a former House member, said he has fond memories of the retreat and the train rides back and forth. "Just know our hearts are with you," he said.

Pence was the featured speaker Wednesday night at the GOP retreat. Trump was to address lawmakers Thursday.

Other doctor-lawmakers who assisted included Reps. Michael Burgess, of Texas; Phil Roe, of Tennessee; Larry Bucshon, of Indiana; and Roger Marshall, of Kansas, according to those aboard.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, of Wisconsin, was on the train and was unhurt, aides said.

Top public health official resigns over conflicts

BY NOAM N. LEVEY
Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention resigned Wednesday following reports that she traded in tobacco stocks despite being the nation's top public health official and heading an agency that has led U.S. anti-smoking initiatives for decades.

Dr. Brenda Fitzgerald, whom President Donald Trump tapped in the summer to head the CDC, purchased shares in Japan Tobacco International as well as stocks in a number of health care companies after taking office, according to a report this week by Politico.

The stock trading echoes the behavior of Trump's first Health and Human Services secretary, Tom Price, who was forced to resign last year amid questions about his frequent use of charter aircraft at taxpayer expense.

While a congressman, Price also traded extensively in health care companies even as he pushed legislation and took other actions that affected many of those same companies.

It is not clear whether Fitzgerald, a former OB-GYN doctor and Georgia health commissioner, took

any official actions that may have affected the value of her stocks. But she had recused herself from various duties as CDC director, citing potential conflicts.

A spokesman for the Health and Human Services Department said Wednesday that Fitzgerald offered her resignation after raising the recusal issues with the incoming department secretary, Alex Azar.

"Dr. Fitzgerald owns certain complex financial interests that have imposed a broad recusal limiting her ability to complete all of her duties as the CDC director," Matt Lloyd said in a statement. "Due to the nature of these financial interests, Dr. Fitzgerald could not divest from them in a definitive time period."

Among the companies whose stock Fitzgerald purchased last year after taking office were pharmaceutical giants Merck & Co. and Bayer, and health insurer Humana, according to financial disclosures first reported by Politico.

The stock in Japan Tobacco, a multinational that sells Winston and Camel cigarettes around the world, was valued at between \$1,001 and \$15,000.

Fitzgerald, though praised by some in public health after she was appointed, has maintained a relatively low profile as CDC director, particularly compared with many of her predecessors who have been outspoken champions for issues such as smoking cessation.



Fitzgerald

Lawmaker who led probe on Benghazi leaving House

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Rep. Trey Gowdy, R-S.C., a powerful GOP watchdog who built his name leading the investigation into the 2012 attacks against Americans in Benghazi, Libya, has become the latest prominent Republican to head for the exits rather than run for another term.

The former South Carolina prosecutor who is chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee said in a statement Wednesday that he planned to return to the justice system, though he did not elaborate.

The former lengthy investigation into the attacks that killed the U.S. ambassador and three other Americans focused heavily on Hillary Clinton's role as secretary of state, though an 800-page report produced no smoking gun pointing to wrongdoing by her. The investigation also revealed that Clinton used a private email



Gowdy

server for government work, prompting an FBI investigation that proved to be an albatross in the Democrat's 2016 presidential campaign.

Today, Gowdy is involved in one of the House's Russia investigations and is the leader of a renewed review of the FBI and Clinton's emails.

Gowdy, 53, was elected in the 2010 tea party wave that returned control of the House to Republicans.

He is the ninth House committee head to step down. "Whatever skills I may have are better utilized in a courtroom than in Congress, and I enjoy our justice system more than our political system," Gowdy said.

NATION

RNC has huge financial edge going into midterms

By MICHELLE YE HEE LEE
AND ANU NARAYANSWAMY
The Washington Post

President Donald Trump's robust small-donor base helped the Republican National Committee vastly outpace its Democratic counterpart in 2017 as the two parties geared up for a crucial midterm campaign season, new Federal Election Commission filings show.

But Trump's polarizing effect also helped buoy the two Democratic congressional committees, which pulled in more money than the GOP committees heading into the 2018 elections.

The RNC, the GOP House and Senate

party committees and the two main Republican congressional super PACs together raised nearly \$289 million in 2017, according to filings and news reports. Donations to the RNC made up nearly half of that total. And 44 percent of the \$123 million raised by the RNC came from small-dollar contributions of less than \$200.

The Democratic National Committee trailed far behind its Republican counterpart, raising \$64.5 million in 2017. But the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee last year both out-raised their respective GOP counterparts, the National Republican Senate Committee and the National Republican Congress-

sional Committee.

In total, the three Democratic party committees and two main Democratic congressional super PACs raised about \$258 million in 2017, filings show.

Overall, the five Republican groups had about \$30 million more in cash on hand than the five Democratic groups combined.

Republicans are expected to face a tough defensive battle in this year's congressional elections. Historically, the president's party generally loses ground during the midterms. Trump's low approval rating — 36 percent, according to a January Washington Post-ABC News poll — poses a challenge for many Republican incumbents in swing districts, particularly in the face of energized

grass-roots opposition on the left.

Democrats held a 12-point advantage among registered voters in the January Post-ABC News poll when asked if they would support a Democrat or Republican in their district. According to election forecasters, Democrats need a 6- to 8-point edge on this question in the fall to win enough seats to flip control of the House. A Washington Post analysis of surveys conducted in the past month showed Democrats hold an 8-point advantage on this survey question.

Still, Trump has galvanized small-dollar contributions from his base into the RNC, and the influx of such donations was key to the RNC's fundraising haul last year.



GEORGE WALKER IV, THE (NASHVILLE) TENNESSEAN/AP

Nashville Mayor Megan Barry speaks during a news conference Wednesday at the Metro Courthouse in Nashville, Tenn.

Nashville mayor admits affair with ex-chief of security detail

By JONATHAN MATTISSE
Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Nashville Mayor Megan Barry said she plans to continue serving in office after revealing that she had an extramarital affair with the former head of her security detail.

Standing alone in front of TV cameras as she explained herself to reporters for about 15 minutes Wednesday night, Barry apologized, saying she was embarrassed, sad and sorry for all the pain she has caused.

The mayor also said in a news release that she accepts full responsibility for the pain she caused her family and the family of Sgt. Robert Forrest, her former security chief. She apologized to her husband, Bruce, who she said remains committed to their marriage.

And she apologized to the people of Nashville, adding that she remains firmly committed to working hard to serve them. The popular mayor, who was elected

in 2015, said progress has been made to offer affordable housing, to improve public education and to promote better transportation options, but there's more work to be done.

In the news conference, she said nothing illegal happened and no policies were violated. Her office released records of her text messages, calendar and travel expenses and records, and Barry said she will be transparent in cooperating with possible investigations.

"I know that God will forgive me, but that Nashville doesn't have to," Barry said. "And I hope that I can earn their trust and, and that you will forgive me."

The first-term mayor's admission follows the painful loss of the Barrys' only son, Max, in July after an overdose on a combination of several drugs, including two opioids.

"This is a very bad day. And I'm going to have several more bad days. But this is not my worst day," Barry said. "And I will tell

you I know the difference between a mistake — I made a serious mistake — but this is not a tragedy."

She said the affair began several months after she came into her administration. She said it was discovered through conversations between their two spouses and personal conversations. She would not say when the affair ended, only saying that it's over.

She accumulated more than \$33,000 in travel expenses combined for herself and Forrest from January 2017 to late October 2017, and said all of the trips were business-related.

Forrest said Jan. 17 that he would retire Wednesday after more than 31 years with Metro Nashville Police. He spent 14 years of that tenure supervising the mayor's security detail over three administrations.

In his own news release Wednesday, Forrest said he never violated his oath as a police officer or engaged in actions that would abuse the public trust.

Town sued for closing shortcut near bridge leading to New York

Associated Press

LEONIA, N.J. — A lawyer is suing a New Jersey town that has barred nonresidents from using its roads as a shortcut to the world's busiest bridge, arguing that its action to block drivers drawn to side streets by navigation apps is illegal.

Leonia last week started barring the use of side streets to nonresidents during the morning and evening commutes to and from the George Washington Bridge, which connects Fort Lee, N.J., and New York City. Violators could face \$200 fines.

Attorney Jacqueline Rosa filed a lawsuit Tuesday claiming that Leonia has no right to do that. Rosa, from nearby Edgewater, told The Record that she has had to sit in an extra 20 minutes of traffic since the restrictions were put into place and that traffic has now been pushed into neighbor-

hood communities.

"I am filing it because thousands of people are impacted by this and someone needs to have this ordinance overturned," Rosa said. "If every town did what Leonia did, it would be absolutely ridiculous. Every single person would have to use a highway to get anywhere."

Leonia Mayor Judah Zeigler said that he can't comment on pending litigation but that "my job is to take action that I truly believe to be in the best interests of my constituents."

"I'm not going to take actions that I believe are morally or legally wrong," he said.

Leonia police Chief Thomas Rowe said studies have shown more than 2,000 vehicles often pass through town from just one of the three exits off Interstate 95. The town has about 9,200 residents and a police force of 18.

Trump administration delays onset of clean water rule

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration on Wednesday delayed implementation of an Obama-era clean water rule by another two years to give the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers more time to do away with it.

The move follows a Supreme Court ruling last week that said legal challenges to the Waters of the U.S. rule should be decided in federal district courts.

That will result in the lifting of a stay issued by an appeals court blocking the 2015 rule from going into effect.

The rule expanded the definitions for wetlands and small waterways under the Clean Water Act — prompting opposition from agribusiness, mining and industry groups.

The expansion was intended

to reduce sources of pollution dumped into the small tributaries of larger lakes and rivers.

President Donald Trump issued an executive order nearly a year ago ordering a review of the WOTUS rule.

By moving the effective date to 2020, the Trump administration buys itself more time to issue a replacement.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's fellow Republicans quickly praised the two-year delay.

"The Obama administration's outrageous Waters of the United States rule would have put backyards, ponds, puddles and farm fields under Washington's control," said Sen. John Barrasso, of Wyoming, chairman of the Senate environment committee.

Environmentalists predicted the rewrite will let polluters off the hook.

NATION

Cancer therapy can hurt the heart

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE
Associated Press

Save your life but harm your heart? Health experts are sounding a warning as potential side effects of a growing number of breast cancer treatments come to light.

In its first statement on the topic, the American Heart Association on Thursday said women should consider carefully the risks and benefits of any therapies that may hurt hearts. Not all treatments carry these risks, and there may be ways to minimize or avoid some.

"We want patients to get the best treatment for their breast cancer," said Dr. Laxmi Mehta, a women's heart health expert at a Johns Hopkins University who led the panel that wrote the statement. "Everyone should have a conversation with their doctor about what are the side effects."

There are more than 3 million breast cancer survivors and nearly 48 million women with heart disease in the United States.

"Most people with breast cancer fear death from breast cancer. Even after they survive that, they still fear it," but heart disease is more likely to kill, especially after age 65, Mehta said.

What are the problems and which treatments can cause them?

Side effects can include abnormal rhythms, valve problems or heart failure, where the heart slowly weakens and can't pump effectively. Symptoms may not appear until long after treatment ends.

Herceptin and similar drugs for a specific type of breast cancer can cause heart failure. Sometimes it goes away if treatment is stopped, but it can be permanent.

Radiation can affect arteries and spur narrowing or blockages. Other drugs can lead to abnormal heart rhythms or artery spasms, which can cause chest pain and possibly lead to a heart attack. Still others can damage DNA.

Some research suggests that powerful new drugs that harness the immune system to fight cancer may, in rare cases, cause heart damage, especially when used together.

What can be done to avoid harm?

If heart failure develops early during breast cancer treatment, sometimes therapy can be slowed down or altered.

Certain chemotherapies such as doxorubicin, sold as Adriamycin and in generic form, might be less risky if given slowly. Some research suggests that a drug called dexrazoxane may minimize damage if given to women with advanced breast cancer who are getting high doses of doxorubicin.



CRIST T. KOJIMA, HONOLULU STAR-ADVERTISER/AP

From left, former Hawaii Gov. George Ariyoshi, Princess Abigail Kawanakoa and her then-girlfriend, Veronica Gail Worth, arrive before oral arguments in 2015 at the Hawaii State Supreme Court in Honolulu. Kawanakoa, 91, is fighting her former lawyer over control of her \$215 million fortune.

Hawaii's 'last princess' fights for control over her fortune

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER
Associated Press

HONOLULU — Every day, tourists flock to a downtown Honolulu palace for a glimpse of the way Hawaii's royal family lived, marveling at its gilded furniture, lavish throne room and grand staircase made from prized koa wood.

But few know Iolani Palace — America's only royal residence — has relied in part on the generosity of a descendant of that family while the relic of the monarchy's rule now serves as a museum.

Multimillionaire heiress Abigail Kimoiki Kekaulike Kawanakoa, considered by many to be Hawaii's last princess, has paid the palace's electric bills for the past six years.

But the intensely private Native Hawaiian, whose \$215 million fortune includes racehorses and real estate, is no longer in a position to fund her pet charities, including the palace and various Native Hawaiian causes.

A court struggle is playing out for the 91-year-old's fortune. Her longtime lawyer persuaded a judge to appoint him trustee, arguing a stroke over the summer left the heiress impaired. She claims she's fine, and has since fired that lawyer and married her girlfriend of 20 years.

Since the court battle began, the electricity payments have stopped, Iolani Palace Executive Director Kippen de Alba Chu said. Officials who run the palace completed in 1882 have relied on a backup plan to pay the light bill and stay open.

Kawanakoa is the granddaughter of the late Prince David

Kawanakoa, who was named an heir to the throne. She has no official title or real power in the state, but that doesn't matter to many Native Hawaiians who see her as a link to when Hawaii was its own nation — before American businessmen, backed by U.S. Marines, overthrew the Hawaiian kingdom 125 years ago.

"She was always called princess among Hawaiians because Hawaiians have acknowledged that lineage," said Kimo Alama Keaulana, assistant professor of Hawaiian language and studies at Honolulu Community College. "Hawaiians hold dear to genealogy. And so, genealogically speaking, she is of high royal blood."

Some note that Prince David has other living descendants and say the heiress is held up as the last tie to the monarchy simply because of her wealth. Kawanakoa's riches come from being the great-granddaughter of James Campbell, an Irish businessman who made his fortune as a sugar plantation owner and one of Hawaii's largest landowners.

But Kawanakoa's supporters say she is the closest connection to the throne because, although they were already related, the prince's widow formally adopted her as a daughter.

Last princess or not, Kawanakoa's inheritance wields tangible power — and some worry about it falling into the wrong hands.

In July her longtime attorney, James Wright, filed an emergency petition seeking to be named successor trustee to all of her trust assets, saying in court documents that Kawanakoa is "impaired as a result of an acute stroke."

Two days later, a judge granted the request.

In August, attorney Michael Lilly wrote a letter to the judge saying he now represents Kawanakoa and he strongly contests any contention she is incompetent.

Lawyers for the heiress dispute she had a stroke, saying in court papers it was a transient ischemic attack, which has similar symptoms but caused no permanent damage.

Wright's court filings also raise allegations that Veronica Gail Worth, Kawanakoa's 64-year-old wife, physically abused her.

Neither Kawanakoa nor Worth responded to requests for comment from The Associated Press. However, Kawanakoa's attorney said in court papers the abuse claims are false and that Kawanakoa fell and "struck furniture," which caused the bruising, which is not uncommon at someone her age.

A judge in September appointed a special master to independently investigate the heiress' mental capacity and the abuse allegations. Some Hawaiians, such as well-known activist Walter Ritte, aren't interested in revering her genealogy or wealth. Hawaiians, especially those who live in poverty, can't relate to her, Ritte said.

"She has given some money here and there," he said. "She could have done a lot more for Hawaiians."

The court battle focusing on Kawanakoa's age and health has others reflecting on her as a final living reminder of Hawaii's monarchy and as a symbol of a proud Hawaiian national identity that has endured.

Palace officials will be watching the case. A hearing is tentatively scheduled for Feb. 8.

Protections extended for Syrians in the US

By MATTHEW LEE
AND JOSH LEDERMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration said Wednesday that it would allow nearly 7,000 Syrians to remain in the United States for another 18 months but won't let more Syrian citizens apply for the special protection program.

Under a humanitarian program known as "Temporary Protected Status," thousands of Syrians have been allowed to avoid returning to their war-torn country of origin, but the current program is set to expire on March 31, forcing a decision on whether to extend.

Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said "ongoing armed conflict and extraordinary conditions" justified the extension to Sept. 30, 2019.

The relief at being spared 18 months is tinged with disappointment that applicants must have been in the United States since Aug. 1, 2016, disqualifying newer arrivals.

The decision will be felt hardest in California, Michigan and Texas, top destinations for the roughly 86,000 Syrians living in the United States.

It follows a contentious debate within the Trump administration about whether to cut off the program, with immigration hardliners in the White House urging a total halt to the program while the State Department and other agencies argued for continuing it.

Since taking office, President Donald Trump has cut off the special protections for citizens of several countries, including Honduras and El Salvador, after determining that once-perilous conditions no longer preclude citizens from going home.

Yet Syria remains entangled in a bloody civil war that shows no signs of being resolved in the near future. Although Islamic State, which once controlled much of Syria, has been squeezed from almost all of its former territory, armed opposition groups continue to fight with Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces and with extremist groups that continue to pose a threat across Syria. U.S. military forces are active both on the ground and in the skies above Syria.

The Trump administration has faulted previous U.S. administrations for letting foreigners stay in the United States long past when the natural disasters or other emergencies that necessitated the special protections have been resolved. Nielsen stressed that she believes such protections should be temporary, and Trump has advocated resettling Syrian refugees closer to home.

NATION

Video game maker using courts to stop cheaters

By EMERY P. DALESIO
Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — The maker of a video game that pits players worldwide in a fight for survival on virtual terrain has used U.S. courts to successfully chasten cheaters from Ukraine to Minnesota.

North Carolina-based Epic Games has in the past two months squeezed promises from men in Minnesota, Sweden and Russia to stop cheating and spoiling revenues from its popular "Fortnite" online multiplayer game. The company also closed its case against a Louisiana boy with a confidential settlement.

Only the Minnesota case a \$5,000 penalty if he resumes cheating. Epic Games spokesman Nick Chester would not say Wednesday whether that's because the company can't enforce financial penalties

against foreign copyright violators. Chester would not say how much Epic Games estimates it has lost because of the cheating.

The company has sued three Americans and seven foreign gamers for hacks that undercut the game the company's lawyers say is played by more than 30 million people worldwide. The company accuses the hackers of using and sharing covert code "that allows players to obtain game currency without paying for it" and making YouTube videos showing how well they are able to overpower opponents.

"Fortnite" players "explore, scavenge gear, build fortified structures and fight waves of monsters who want to kill the player and her friends," company lawyers said when suing a New Zealand man earlier this month. The winner is the last one standing.

Cheating gamers are able to overpower their opponents by using tools that allow them to see through solid objects, impersonate other players and make moves other players cannot, according to one lawsuit. Up to 100 people can play the game at a time.

"Fortnite" costs nothing to play online but generates revenue by charging players for cosmetic options, like different outfits for their virtual character, which don't give players an edge against rivals. Game currency can be purchased in packages of up to \$100.

Cheaters "obtain items for free that other users must purchase or obtain limited-distribution game tools without earning them," one lawsuit said. Cheaters who win regularly make the game less appealing and less likely players will shell out real

cash.

The lawsuits, which were filed in North Carolina and California, allege violation of the game's copyright and terms of use contract. One of the targets is a 14-year-old Delaware boy. Other accused cheaters in Russia and Canada have so far escaped receiving official notice of the lawsuits against them.

A 1990s-era update to federal copyright law sets up procedures where companies can demand that online service providers like YouTube remove material that violates the companies' rights.

The person or company that posted the challenged material can counter with a statement that the material isn't illegal. But challenging the takedown notice can give U.S. courts jurisdiction over foreign residents in the dispute.

Cannabis capitalists exploit legal loopholes by making drug a 'gift'

By PHILIP MARCELO
Associated Press

BOSTON — The single bottle of juice delivered to your door will set you back at least \$55. But the bag of marijuana that comes with it? On the house.

Retail marijuana stores are months away from opening in Massachusetts, but some companies have been quietly operating for more than a year, selling and delivering marijuana via a legal loophole.

Companies like HighSpeed, which describes itself as a juice delivery service, are exploiting so-called "gifting" provisions that are on the books in Massachusetts and most other states where marijuana has been legalized.

They generally allow the exchange of small amounts of the drug so long as it's given away — "gifted" — from one adult to another. In other words, passing a joint at a party or dropping a bud in your brother's Christmas stocking won't result in fines or jail time.

But some entrepreneurs see the provisions as an opportunity to get ahead of the regulated market, planting an early stake in what could become a crowded and lucrative industry.

Gifting also allows cannabis capitalists to undercut licensed shops because they don't face the same oversight or pay marijuana sales taxes. And underground sellers could complicate things in places like Vermont, Maine and Washington, D.C., which have legalized pot but have no firm plans to open regulated markets.

"Under any fair reading of the law, these businesses are illegal," said Roger Katz, a Republican state senator in Maine who is studying the issue. "If it walks like a duck, quacks like a duck, it is a duck."

At least four enterprises have done gifting business in Massachusetts since marijuana was legalized in December 2016, two



Dauber.com delivery company charged \$100 for the pictured T-shirt but the marijuana was included for free.

of them in the Boston area, The Associated Press found in an investigation that included records gathered from law enforcement agencies around the state.

In addition to HighSpeed, a Boston-area company cleverly called Dauber has drivers delivering marijuana-themed T-shirts that come with gifts of pot.

Officials in western Massachusetts also looked into a Craigslist ad offering plastic sandwich bags costing up to \$325 apiece (the marijuana in them was free) but dropped the case after they couldn't identify the seller.

In Springfield, officials ordered a smoke shop called Mary Jane Makes Your Heart Sing to shut down in March after it gave marijuana to customers who paid a \$25 to \$50 admission fee.

That hasn't scared HighSpeed, which also operates in the nation's capital.

"We've had no issues with law enforcement, and we're going to do our best to keep it that way," said founder David Umeh. "We're not doing anything wrong. We're abiding by the current legislation until it changes."

Gifting provisions are on the books in Massachusetts and all but one of the other states that have legalized marijuana: Alas-

ka, California, Colorado, Maine, Nevada, Oregon and Washington state, plus D.C. Most instituted the measure specifically as part of new marijuana laws.

Vermont does not have a provision, but local experts and activists argue the exchanges will be permitted there, too, since they're not expressly banned.

Some states have tried to stem abuse of the laws by prohibiting businesses from advertising marijuana giveaways or specifically banning "delayed or disguised" payments for marijuana gifts, said Leo Beletsky, a law professor at Northeastern University in Boston.

But businesses simply find ways to obscure what they're doing, he said, and then rely largely on word of mouth to make sales. Clued-in customers can infer how much pot they're ordering judging by the price and size of the items accompanying it, but for the most part, they're at the mercy of the seller.

In the case of HighSpeed, there is no mention of marijuana on its website. The company sells drinks priced from \$55 to \$150, depending on whether the beverage comes with "Love" or "Lots of Love."

The AP recently put in a \$60



PHOTOS BY STEVEN SENNE/AP

Companies like HighSpeed have been exploiting a provision in marijuana laws that allows people to "gift" up to an ounce of marijuana. The tea was at least \$60, but the pot was free.

order for "Raspberry Roxbury" with "Love" and received a bottle of Tazo juice along with about an eighth of an ounce of marijuana.

Dauber also doesn't explicitly spell out its marijuana "gift" on its website. But when the AP ordered a \$100 product listed as "Luxury Tshirt — Citrus — small," the brown paper bag delivered by a driver contained a white T-shirt with the company's name in black over an image of a marijuana leaf — and a clear plastic bag of marijuana labeled "1/4 Ruthless OG."

The opening of retail shops in states with marijuana laws should eventually make most gifting operations obsolete, said Morgan Fox, spokesman for the D.C.-based Marijuana Policy Project. "People want quality controlled products," he said. "The

sooner that happens, the sooner this sort of thing disappears."

But in Colorado, where pot shops opened in 2014, gifting businesses are still hatching creative ways to skirt the law, said Detective Jerry Linfolt, of the Colorado Springs Police Department. The department shut down 14 gifting businesses last year.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions' decision to rescind an Obama-era policy that called for noninterference with legal state marijuana operations could also help bolster gifting and other underground operations, Beletsky said.

"If the feds somehow came down on state regulators or licensed retail operations," he said, "that could provide a convenient opening for these gray-market operators to scale up where they're already doing."

NATION

Olympics drawing adoptees as S. Korea confronts past

By SALLY HO
Associated Press

When Megan Olson lands in South Korea for the Winter Olympics next week, she'll feel something both surreal and vivid.

An intoxicating sense of belonging.

A deep sense of loss.

Pride for the motherland she barely knows after being secretly adopted away.

Olson, 33, a social worker from Minnesota, is joining dozens of fellow South Korean adoptees returning to their birth country for the Winter Games in Pyeongchang.

Many endured cultural, racial and national identity issues stemming from an international adoption phenomenon that peaked in the 1980s. Now, the once-in-a-lifetime Olympics experience will satisfy an internal pressure for some adoptees to justify being where they came from, even though it won't erase the fact that they were once sent away with shame and enigma.

"I think I really wanted to go back," Olson said. "It feels like it's home, but at the same time, when I get there I'm not home. I don't really know where I belong."

The Olympics will also reconcile a part of their life journey that has been bookended by an era of complete economic transformation for South Korea.

Much of that rise happened at the same time the small Asian country, lacking a solid social welfare system, dispersed an estimated 200,000 Korean-born children, according to Richard Lee, a University of Minnesota professor who studies adoptions.

The cultural diaspora reaches more than a dozen countries around the globe, including in Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. But

for South Korea, the timing of the adoption boom coinciding with their costly 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul is still a subject of criticism among some.

No longer in the shadows of the Korean War era, the country over the past half-century has become a powerhouse on the world stage, thanks to its fortunes in technology, cultural reach from pop music, and a rigorous education system.

All the while, a majority of those South Korean orphans landed in the U.S. They grew up largely with white parents in the western world where adoption is seen as a humanitarian endeavor. Now adults, they've come of age and some have risen in the worlds of politics, fashion and entertainment.

That such orphans are now successful enough to afford an elite experience like the Olympic Games has surprised some of the local in a patriotic society where adoption is taboo.

Keziah Park, of the International Korean Adoptee Service, called it a "slap in the face" for status-driven South Koreans. The Seoul-based nonprofit since the 1990s has organized trips and birth-search pilgrimages for adoptees.

"When they left, they were orphans, and they were abandoned," Park said. "No one could take care of them. But when they come back, it's a symbolic journey to Koreans observing them."

It really changes the mindset of Koreans. It allows Korea as a society to reflect on the choices they made."

The pressure to justify being there can also be distressing if they have already gone back to find their birth stories as a practical matter. Women about their genetic health or find out what happened to them as young children. And even if their adoptive

families are supportive of their pilgrimage back, it can be difficult to reconcile their identity and feelings for the country when they lack Korean family ties.

Park organized the weeklong Olympics tourism trip hoping to ease that internal conflict. It will include the opening ceremony and sporting events. They're also hoping to meet Marissa Brandt, an adoptee raised in America who will play for the Korean women's hockey team.

"Although they have an intrinsic purpose to be there, they don't have anyone welcoming them to be there, so they felt it was meaningless," Park said. "That purpose to be there the adoptees want more than you think."

More than two dozen adoptees are expected on the trip, including those now living in Norway, Denmark, Italy, France, Australia and the United States.

Olson, of Robbinsdale, Minn., said she thinks about going back to South Korea so often that it can wear on her husband. But each time she's there, she asks herself if it should be the last visit because it's so emotionally draining.

Olson found her birth parents a few years ago through their adoption agency in Seoul. Their meetings have left her distraught, frustrated and unfulfilled. Olson's desperate to understand her true life story but her Korean parents appear indifferent.

She says she was adopted in 1985 as a baby but discovered that they kept a son born a year after Olson. The adoptee doesn't know why her birth parents made those choices. They've only confirmed that she's a secret they'll never tell their other children.

But this upcoming trip to South Korea will offer a welcome reprieve to Olson's heartaches.



DAVE CAMPBELL/AP

Megan Olson, shown with her husband, Luke, at their home in Robbinsdale, Minn., is among dozens of South Korean adoptees returning to their birth country for the 2018 Winter Olympics.

It will be about connecting with fellow adoptees who share this profound experience that they didn't choose to have.

It will be about eating the food that's been missing their whole lives yet tastes so much like home.

It will be about experiencing the glitz and glam of the Olympic Games, though even that is not without concern.

"I don't know who I would cheer for," Olson said. "Should it be the U.S.? Should it be Korea? It's super minute but something I think about."

Ella and Tony LeVeque are two other adoptees who found the Olympics to be the perfect reason to go back to their birth country. The couple met at another adoptee gathering in Seoul before marrying in 2014.

"We obviously really like watching the Olympics. We tally up America versus Canada," said Ella LeVeque, 31, a recruiter who was adopted as a baby to a family in Ottawa, Canada. "And just being able to be there and represent South Korea too, we're going to be able to be proud of all of it."

The two now live in Galesburg,

Mich. Neither has found their birth families.

Matt Galbraith, 36, of Hawaii, said he'll spend time with his birth family after the Olympic events. He was adopted with his brother when he was 5 years old. They grew up in a happy home in the Phoenix area after enduring a dark year at an orphanage in Munsan, near the Demilitarized Zone bordering North Korea.

Galbraith said he found his birth mother in 2009, taking a leap of faith by going to Seoul while he was stationed in Japan with the U.S. Navy.

The woman asked Galbraith for forgiveness after a hotel worker helped reunite them.

He learned that the single mom put her boys up for adoption because she contracted tuberculosis. Without money or support, she feared the worst and hoped her sons could have a better future through adoption.

"I was adopted when I was a little bit older. I remember having memories with them," Galbraith said of his birth family. "I knew that they were still there."

VA criticized over eye care for veterans in rural areas

By NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A Department of Veterans Affairs program aimed at increasing access to eye exams for rural and homeless veterans utilizes a technique that some optometrists consider subpar care.

Through the program, veterans receive eye screenings using technology called auto-refraction to check for vision problems and disease. The results are used as the basis for eyeglass or contact lens prescriptions.

During a typical eye exam, auto-refraction is a starting point for an eyeglass prescription, not the primary source, said Matt Willette, director of congressional relations with the 40,000-member American Optometric Association. The association has raised concerns with the VA that the method could lead to missed diagnoses and imprecise eyeglass prescriptions. It is a claim the VA disputes.

"This is an experimental protocol," Wil-

lette said. "No one has tested to see if it's close to an eye exam, or if it misses a lot of stuff. That really worried us, veterans being worried on."

The program, called Digital Technology-Based Eye Care Services, or TECS, started in 2015 in clinics surrounding the VA medical center in Atlanta. The following year, the state of Georgia enacted a law requiring prescriptions for eyeglasses to be issued after an in-person, comprehensive exam and not limited to information from an auto-refractor. Because the VA is a federal agency, the law does not apply.

The American Optometric Association has issued complaints about TECS since about mid-2016, Willette said. The organization has recently increased its protest after learning the VA might expand the program to more sites nationwide.

In response to criticism that TECS offers substandard care, VA spokesman Curtis Cashour said those claims are "not at all accurate." There's a quality-assurance system in place, he said, that "tracks out-

comes and ensures high-quality care." The screenings are conducted by licensed and certified optometrists, he said.

At least the first 13 months of TECS, a technician conducted the screening, according to a published report on the program. The results were then sent to an eye doctor, and patients with abnormal findings were scheduled for face-to-face exams.

In January 2017, leaders of TECS published early findings that the program saved time for veterans and physicians and led to cost savings for the VA when compared with face-to-face exams at VA hospitals.

The VA is also touting it as a method to improve veterans' access to care.

Of the 2,690 veterans who received a checkup in the program's first 13 months, 33 percent secured a same-day appointment and 98 percent got an appointment within 30 days of requesting one, according to the published findings.

"The goal of the program is to reduce health care disparities in veterans by pro-

viding better access to eye care for rural and homeless veterans," Cashour said. "These populations are medically underserved, and VA is working to modernize and improve the way we deliver eye care to our veterans to prevent blindness."

But Willette argued veterans failing to get an appointment at a VA facility could turn to the Choice program for a comprehensive eye exam rather than settling for an inferior checkup. The Choice program, created in 2014 to reduce wait times, allows VA patients to receive private-sector medical care.

Willette also contends the VA isn't doing enough to warn veterans that the TECS screenings aren't comprehensive exams.

"VA is essentially trying to pass it off as an eye exam, but it's not," he said.

Cashour said brochures and other educational materials about the TECS program emphasize the screenings don't replace in-person exams.

wentling.nikki@stripes.com
Twitter: @nikkiwentling

WORLD



KAMRAN JEBREILI/AP

Thrill-seekers they try out a new zip line Wednesday on the peak of Jebel Jais mountain, northeast of Ras al-Khaimah, United Arab Emirates.

United Arab Emirates opens the world's longest zip line

Associated Press

RAS AL-KHAIMAH, United Arab Emirates — The United Arab Emirates claimed a record on Thursday with the opening of the world's longest zip line, measuring 1.76 miles in length.

Guinness World Records officials certified the zip line in Ras

al-Khaimah on the same day the attraction opened to the public.

The Jebel Jais Flight takes thrill-seekers atop the country's largest mountain peak from a launch pad 5,512 feet above sea level. For nearly three minutes, riders are suspended above the mountain as they glide past rocky terrain.

It's the latest effort by the smaller, lesser-known emirate of Ras al-Khaimah to attract more tourists and expatriate visitors from neighboring emirates like Abu Dhabi and Dubai, which has two separate zip line attractions whizzing past some of the world's tallest skyscrapers.

Polish Senate backs controversial legislation on Holocaust speech

By MONIKA SCISLOWSKA

Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — Poland's Senate has backed legislation that will regulate Holocaust speech, a move that already has strained relations with both Israel and the U.S.

The bill proposed by Poland's ruling conservative Law and Justice party and voted for early Thursday could see individuals facing up to three years in prison for intentionally attempting to falsely attribute the crimes of Nazi Germany to the Polish nation as a whole. It was approved by the lower house last week.

Though the bill exempts artistic and research work, it has raised concerns that the Polish state will decide for itself what it considers to be historic facts. The bill already has sparked a diplomatic dispute with Israel and has drawn calls from the U.S. for a reconsideration.

Sensors voted 57 to 23 in favor of the bill with two abstentions. To become law, the bill requires approval from President Andrzej Duda, who supports it.

Poland's government says it is fighting against the use of phrases like "Polish death camps" to refer to death camps operated by Nazi Germany in occupied Poland during World War II. Poland was among the hardest-hit victims of Nazi Germany and is preserving Holocaust memorials.

Expressing surprise at the storm the legislation has unleashed, the Polish government said it was to issue an explanatory statement later Thursday.

Though Deputy Justice Minister Patryk Jaki suggested Israel had been consulted on the bill and voiced no objections, many in Israel have argued that the move is an attempt to whitewash the role some Poles played in the killing of Jews during World War II.

Halina Birenbaum, a Holocaust survivor and acclaimed Israeli author, called the new law "madness," telling Israel's Army Radio it was "ludicrous and disproportionate to what actually happened to Jews there."

Birenbaum, a member of the International Auschwitz Committee, said she was concerned the Polish government "might arrest me

there for what I'm saying now."

And Israeli Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz said the law constituted "a denial of Poland's part in the Holocaust of the Jews." He called on Netanyahu to recall Israel's ambassador to Poland immediately for consultation.

"In the balance between diplomatic considerations and moral considerations, there must be a clear decision: perpetuating the memory of the victims of the Holocaust above any other consideration."

Working groups in Poland and Israel are to start discussing the issue this week, although it was not clear what effect it could have on the bill.

Just hours before the Senate's vote, the U.S. asked Poland to rethink the proposed legislation, saying it could "undermine free speech and academic discourse."

State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert voiced concern about the "repercussions this draft legislation, if enacted, could have on Poland's strategic interests and relationships — including with the United States and Israel."

African leaders nearly demanded Trump apology

By ELIAS MESERET

Associated Press

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia — African leaders this week came close to demanding that President Donald Trump publicly apologize for his vulgar remark about the continent "that defies all forms of diplomatic etiquette," according to a draft declaration obtained by The Associated Press.

The draft, created during an African Union summit on Sunday and Monday, says heads of state and government are "deeply appalled" by Trump's reported comparison of African countries to a dirty toilet.

It warns that the strategic partnership between Africa and the U.S. is at risk because of Trump's "racist and xenophobic behavior."

The African leaders appear to have changed their minds on issuing the draft declaration because of a Trump letter to them last week pleading his "deep respect" and saying Secretary of State Rex Tillerson wanted an "extended visit" to the continent in March, his first in that role. The letter emerged after Trump met with Rwanda's president and new African Union Chairman Paul Kagame at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, last week.

Many African leaders have been outraged by Trump's comment

last month after nearly a year of little attention by his administration to the world's second-most-populous continent. Concerns have been widespread over proposed deep cuts to U.S. foreign aid and a shift from humanitarian assistance to counterterrorism.

Trump has said he didn't use the vulgar language, while others present say he did.

Ahead of the summit, the chairman of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, declared that "Africa cannot keep quiet" about Trump's "shocking" remarks. But by Monday he had toned down his stance, telling reporters only that African leaders had received a "letter of correspondence" from Trump and "we've taken due note of it."

The draft declaration, however, shows how the 55-nation continental body came close to speaking out.

It says African leaders were "dismayed and shocked by the increasingly consistent trend from the Trump administration to denigrate people of African descent and other people of color thereby promoting racism, xenophobia and bigotry."

It calls on the U.S. to retract Trump's remark and demands that he officially and publicly apologize to all Africans and people of African descent.

UN official: Rohingya crisis has 'hallmarks' of genocide

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — The U.N. special envoy on human rights in Myanmar said Thursday that the Myanmar military's violent operations against Rohingya Muslims bear "the hallmarks of a genocide."

Yanghee Lee told reporters in Seoul, where she is based, that she couldn't make a definitive declaration about genocide until a credible international tribunal or court had weighed the evidence, but "we are seeing signs and it is building up to that."

Her briefing described her recent visit to refugee camps in Bangladesh and other areas in the region to discuss the Rohingya, a persecuted Muslim minority in Myanmar. Nearly 700,000 Rohingyas have fled their villages into Bangladesh since the Myanmar military's crackdown following Aug. 25 attacks by Rohingya insurgents. The government of Myanmar has refused her entrance to the country.

Responding to a question about an Associated Press report Thursday that details a massacre and at least five mass graves in the Myanmar village of Gu Dar Pyin, Lee said that while she didn't have specific details on the villagers, "you can see it's a pattern" that has emerged with the Rohingya.

She said such reports must be investigated, "and this is why we've called for a fact-finding mission ... and access for international bodies to the areas in northern Rakhine state where the Rohingya live."

Lee said that Myanmar's actions were "amounting to crimes against humanity."

"These are part of the hallmarks of a genocide," she said.

"I think Myanmar needs to get rid of this baggage of 'did you or did you not,' and if proven that they did not, then there has to be responsibility and accountability. No stones must be left unturned because the people, the victims, the families of victims definitely deserve an answer," she said.

WIRED WORLD

Like real pets, but without the care

Japan's robots offer alternative to live domestic animals

By YURI KAGEYAMA
Associated Press

TOKYO — Japan, home of the “kawaii” cult of cute, has always had a soft spot for companion robots, in contrast to the more industrial or mechanical types used for assembly lines, surgeries and military missions. The Associated Press spent some time recently with three relatively affordable home robots from Japanese makers that target the elderly, kids and hard-working salarymen pressed for time. Unlike real children or pets, they have off switches and don't need constant attention, dog food or cat litter.

Toyota Motor Corp.'s Kirobo Mini is small enough to fit in your hand and looks like a child clad in a space outfit. It's apt to repeat phrases like, “I missed that, can you say that again?” and “Hmmm ...”

Its name combines the word for “hope,” or “kibo,” and “robot.” And it's designed for cuteness, wiggling seated on its behind, jiggling its arms. It turns its head toward a speaking voice, its saucer-like eyes glowing, sometimes asking inane questions like: “People? What are people?”

The robot understands only Japanese so far, but can be programmed to recognize your name and the name you give it. Such functions are managed through a smartphone app that updates its software periodically so Kirobo Mini will get “smarter” — growing up, so to speak.

I rented Kirobo for two months and named it after my son, Isaku. I got it to use facial recognition to call me by my name, Yuri, and to say “War is bad, isn't it?”

“Isaku has learned one more thing about Yuri today,” it says in a high-pitched electronic voice.

Teaching Isaku a short song took some patience. It turns itself off if told to go to sleep, but only after politely asking, “Please play with me again.”

Sony Corp. has brought the Aibo robot dog back with all its disarming and unpredictable charm.

The Japanese maker of the PlayStation video game consoles pulled the plug on Aibo 12 years



KIROBO MINI

IQ ASSESSMENT: Much more intelligent than a windup toy.
PRICE: 39,800 yen (\$350)

SIZE: 4 inches height seated; 6.5 ounces in weight

POTENTIAL: Toyota is considering connecting Kirobo to car navigation and smart-driving capabilities. It now connects to the latest Prius hybrid, placed in a special dock that links to car navigation, but only has basic functions like reminding the driver to turn off the headlights. It won't do any driving.

Kirobo Minis are displayed during a 2016 press unveiling in Tokyo. Kirobo Mini recognizes faces and can manage simple chatter.

SHIZUO KAMBAYASHI/AP

ago, drawing an outcry from global fans.

The improved Aibo has more natural looking eyes, thanks to advanced OLED, or organic light-emitting diodes. It can cock its head and sway its hips at more varied, subtle angles.

Sony says its “heart,” more aptly its brain, is in an internet “cloud” service that serves as Aibo's memory. In theory it could, with time and work, develop its canine artificial intelligence.

Aibo has a high-pitched electronic “bark,” but can't otherwise talk. Like the original model, it

responds to a pink ball and a pink plastic bone, to voices and to petting. It can crouch on its belly, strut around and wag its tail, do tricks like picking up the plastic bone with its mouth or lifting its paws. It seems to pant with joy when petted and can perk an ear like it's listening.

Sony's Yusuke Kozuka says that given recent advances in robotics and AI, the time seemed right for a new Aibo.

Aibo went on sale Jan. 11 in Japan. The first batch of advance orders, in November, sold out in 30 minutes. Overseas sales are being

considered but still undecided.

Tokyo-based Yukai Engineering designed QOOBO (pronounced koo-boh), a fuzzy, huggable cushion with a whimsically swishy tail. Qoobo is designed to deliver a calming therapeutic effect for the cat-lover who can't have a real kitty.

This companion robot is ingenious in its simplicity — much is purposely left to the imagination. It has no face or whiskers, no legs and no purr, just a responsive tail that wags slowly when it is gently stroked and energetically when it is tapped, so it could be a dog.

“Some say this reflects the Japanese cultural ability to appreciate negative space in art,” said Tsubasa Tominaga, of Yukai Engineering.

He said Japanese prefer to interact with cute things, not digital assistants on impersonal gadgets, as Apple does with Siri and Amazon with Alexa.

A single charge will have your pillow-with-a-tail wagging for eight hours. It's available through a fundraising site and online orders. Delivery, now only for Japan and the U.S., is set for later this year.

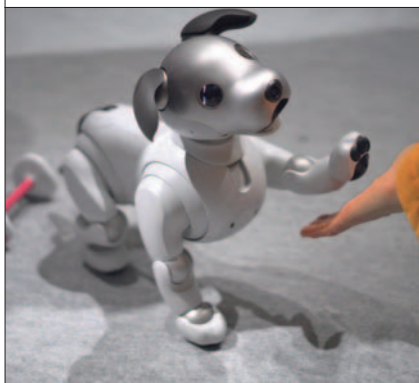
AIBO

IQ ASSESSMENT: Puppy-level

PRICE: \$1,800, but extra costs for cloud and maintenance services

SIZE: 12 inches long body; 5 pounds in weight

POTENTIAL: Not a disappointment for hard-core fans, but does it have enough mass appeal to be a big seller?



EUGENE HOSHINO/AP

Sony Corp. has brought the Aibo robot dog back after a 12-year hiatus. The improved Aibo has more natural looking eyes and it can cock its head and sway its hips.

QOOBO

IQ ASSESSMENT: Not really needed for a cushion.

PRICE: \$90 with a definite price being set later.

SIZE: 13 inches by 21 inches; 2 pounds in weight

POTENTIAL: Not for every home but unobtrusive and cheap enough to catch on with some.



SHIZUO KAMBAYASHI/AP

Yukai Engineering's Tsubasa Tominaga demonstrates Qoobo, a cushion robot, last month at his office in Tokyo. A fuzzy, huggable cushion with a whimsically swishy tail, Qoobo is designed to deliver a calming therapeutic effect for the cat lover who can't have a real kitty.



Stream the Winter Olympics

It's time to stream NBCUniversal's coverage of the Winter Olympics. Visit shopmyexchange.com for details. This benefit is provided to current U.S. Military service members and honorably-discharged Veterans by Comcast NBCUniversal, and in partnership with your local cable, satellite, dMVPD and Telco providers.



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**THE
WINTER
OLYMPICS
FEB 8-25**

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

School evacuated after class cooks calamari

NH EPPING — An effort to cook calamari went awry in a New Hampshire middle school science class, forcing the school to be evacuated.

Police said students were dissecting the squid Tuesday at Epping Middle School and it was being cooked up as calamari.

Fire Lt. Paul St. Cyr told the Portsmouth Herald a boiling pot of oil caused a lot of smoke. School District Superintendent Valerie McKenney said the smoke set off fire alarms.

St. Cyr said students were evacuated and moved to the elementary school to keep them out of the cold for about an hour.

Coach, son accused of attacking referee

WI WAUKESHA — A men's college basketball coach and his adult son have been charged with attacking a referee following a game against a rival school in Wisconsin.

University of Wisconsin-Rock County coach Jamal Mosley, 41, and his son, J'shon Mosley, 20, are charged with battery and disorderly conduct.

They're accused of tracking down the referee, Patrick Anderson, after the team's loss on Jan. 3 to the University of Wisconsin-Waukesha and beating him as he fell to the ground. Witnesses stopped the attack and called police, investigators said.

Anderson sustained abrasions and cuts around one of his eyes.

Jamal Mosley told police the referee had disrespected him during the game by calling him a boy and giving him two technical fouls.

Fugitive found inside trunk used as table

VT RICHFORD — Vermont State Police said a man who has evaded police for nearly a year was arrested after he was found hiding in a piece of furniture.

Officials said Duane Delisle, 47, of Richford, was being sought on sexual assault charges. The Burlington Free Press reported police were informed that Delisle was hiding out in a Richford home and conducted a search.

Trooper John Bruzzi said he found Delisle hiding inside the furniture, which he described as a wooden trunk functioning as a coffee table.

Delisle pleaded not guilty to the sexual assault charge at his arraignment Monday.

Police: Suspect stopped for pizza after robbery

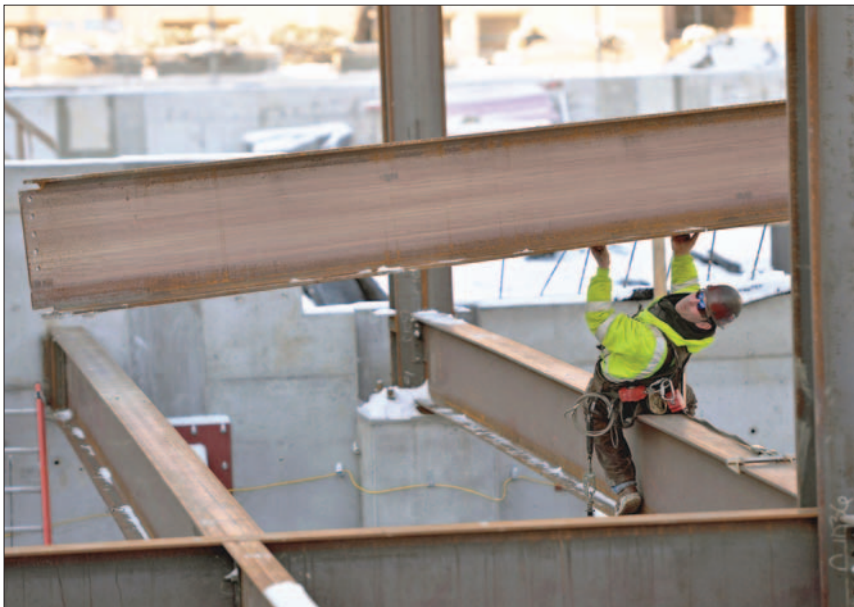
NY ROTTERDAM — Police in upstate New York said they arrested a man who stopped for a slice of pizza after holding up a cellphone store employee.

Rotterdam Police Lt. William Male said the 43-year-old Schenectady man robbed a Cricket Wireless store Tuesday, holding up a clerk with a knife before trying

THE CENSUS

38

The number of military grenades found by a person collecting recyclables on a road in Maryland. The State Fire Marshal office said the grenades were recovered along a road in Dorchester County on Monday. The statement said nine grenades were live, 19 had a fuse but no explosive filler and 10 were inert. Some grenades were disposed of safely at the scene by Fire Marshal bomb squad technicians. Six were taken to a county landfill nearby.



CHRISTOPHER MILLETTE, ERIE (PA.) TIMES-NEWS/AP

Just a little to the left

Chris Cann helps a crane guide a 1,000-pound steel beam into place as the steel frame of the Erie Insurance office building takes shape in downtown Erie, Pa., on Tuesday. As many as 1,200 people will occupy the 346,000-square-foot, seven-story, \$135 million office building, which is expected to open in the spring of 2020.

the woman up with a USB cord and fleeing with a bank deposit bag. The Times Union of Albany reported that after the suspect fled the store, he stopped in a few nearby businesses to use a bathroom and buy a slice of pizza.

Male said police arrested the suspect, who was not named, in Schenectady with a "sum of money."

Bar to get training after MLK Day gift

MI MASON — A Michigan bar's employees will undergo mandatory diversity and sensitivity training following an incident involving a watermelon on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. A biracial employee of Darb's Tavern and Eatery in Mason received a watermelon from her co-workers and boss on the holiday, the Lansing State Journal reported. Kelly Martin Aimer, the employee's mother, posted on Facebook saying the words "Happy 1/2 MLK" and "Happy black day" were written on the watermelon.

The bar's owner and manager, Rob Hearit, issued a statement

Monday that said the action was meant to be a "friendly joke" but was in "poor taste and offensive."

Officials discover bomb left in new restaurant

ID BURLEY — An unexploded bomb was found in the doorway of a new, unopened downtown Idaho restaurant.

The Times-News reported a bomb squad from Twin Falls detonated the bomb in Burley on Monday. Authorities said the bomb's fuse had been lit but the device didn't detonate.

Firefighters found the bomb while extinguishing a blaze at an empty building across the street. Authorities said they're not certain whether a bomb started the fire but they're working under that assumption. No one was injured.

Book Washington signed sells for \$138K

TN KNOXVILLE — A book signed by George Washington that made its way from the Founding Father's personal library to a now-deceased

Tennessee man has sold for \$138,000 at an auction.

A Case Antiques vice president, Sarah Drury, told WBIR-TV an anonymous phone bidder purchased the leather-bound copy of Volume 1 of the Massachusetts Magazine during Saturday's auction in Knoxville.

Washington gave the book to his biographer and former U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall. The book last belonged to a Chattanooga man who died in 2017.

2 men arrested in 2010 Key West gold bar theft

FL KEY WEST — Authorities said two men were arrested in the 2010 theft of a museum's 17th-century gold bar, valued at \$550,000.

A U.S. Department of Justice statement said Richard Steven Johnson, 41, of Rio Linda, Calif., and Jarred Alexander Goldman, 32, of Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., were arrested this week and charged with conspiring to steal and stealing the gold bar from the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage

Museum in Key West.

The 74.8-ounce bars, found in 1980 on a 1622 Spanish galleon wreck off the Florida Keys, hasn't been recovered.

Police: Pair sold gutted TVs as working sets

LA SLIDELL — Police in a New Orleans suburb said two Mississippi men were accused of selling boxes of rocks and gutted flat-screen TVs as working televisions.

Slidell Police Detective Michael Seuzeneau said police answered a report about men trying to sell TVs at a gas station.

He said they arrested Clover Sims, 47, and Lloyd Bradley, 44, both of Gulfport, on one count each of theft by fraud.

Seuzeneau said the victim told investigators he paid \$280 for four TVs.

Detectives asked to check serial numbers in case the TVs were stolen. Seuzeneau said they found gutted TVs and rocks taped inside the boxes to make up the weight of missing parts.

From wire reports

INDEPENDENT NEWS FOR THE U.S. MILITARY COMMUNITY

Whenever They Fight and Wherever They Live

The first Stars and Stripes was printed during the Civil War, when a band of Union soldiers published a handful of editions.

During World War I, Stars and Stripes reappeared in Paris on February 8, 1918, to serve the doughboys of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF), by order of General of the Armies John J. Pershing. An all-military staff produced it weekly until the war's end.

A second renaissance began on April 18, 1942, when a small group of servicemen began publishing a four-page weekly Stars and Stripes in London. They sold each copy for "tuppence" (about 5 cents) and in no time doubled their page count to eight pages, printing daily instead of weekly.

The first World War II edition of Stars and Stripes featured an interview with Gen. George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff. Marshall quoted Gen. Pershing, World War I Commander of the AEF, who described Stripes as a major factor in sustaining morale. Stars and Stripes later found a champion and protector in Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander and later president of the United States.

Eisenhower enforced a hands-off policy in regard to Stars and Stripes that continues to the present day.

Operations expanded, following GIs to the battlefield to bring them the news. During the war, Stars and Stripes published over 30

separate editions, running up to 24 pages per issue.

At one time, Stars and Stripes had some 25 printing locations in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and the Pacific. The Pacific edition was launched a week after VE day (Victory in Europe, May 8, 1945).

The war ended—but Stars and Stripes kept going. Its reporters and photographers continued to join American troops in the field, throughout the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, during the 1990s Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and in Bosnia and Kosovo.

From the 2003 outset of Operation Enduring Freedom, Stars and Stripes was there to report first-hand. The war in Afghanistan continues to receive steady coverage. And during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Stripes reporters embedded with military units in Kuwait and Iraq, as well as on Navy ships in the region.

Stars and Stripes today is a multimedia news organization. The majority of Stars and Stripes unique reporting efforts is read now in digital form, either online at stripes.com or via mobile offerings for iPhone, Android and iPad, in over 200 countries around the world.

The print newspaper is still available for servicemembers, government civilians and their families in

Europe, the Middle East and the Pacific—and in contingency areas. Washington, D.C., hosts the Central office, where daily editions are transmitted to printers in Afghanistan, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Djibouti, as well as in Germany, Italy, UK, Japan, and South Korea. Stars and Stripes also publishes several weeklies (Stripes Guam, Japan, Korea and Okinawa), designed to serve the

needs of their respective military communities.

A U.S. edition comprised exclusively of Stars and Stripes reports from around the world now serves stateside forces and veterans. The U.S. edition is published in partnership with commercial newspaper publishers who serve communities with large military populations.



STARS AND STRIPES RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE

2015 Columbia Journalism School Dart Awards

Feature Story Reporting
(Daily Circulation 1,500,000)
Finalist: Martin Kuz: "Army Sgt. Isaac Sims left the war in Iraq, but it didn't leave him"

2014 Sigma Delta Chi Award – Feature Story Reporting

(Daily Circulation 1,500,000)
Recipient: Martin Kuz: "Death shapes life for teens that prepare bodies of fallen troops for final flight home"

2014 VFW News Media Award

For outstanding contribution to a better understanding of our American way of life and its institutions and interests by honest and forthright reporting.

2013 Military Reporters and Editors Awards

Notable Narrative Winner
Recipient: Laura Rauch

2013 Best American Newspaper Narrative Writing Contest

Notable Narrative Winner
Recipient: Martin Kuz: "Soldiers Recount Attack"

2013 National Headline Awards – Second Place: News Series (Former After: A Warrior Wounded; A Family Challenged)

2011 Military Photographer of the Year – Honorable Mention
Recipient: Joshua DeMott

2011 Sigma Delta Chi Award

Breaking News Photography (Newspaper Circulation 100,001+ or Affiliated Website/National Magazine) Recipient: Laura Rauch: "For those I love I will sacrifice"

2011 John Reagan "Tex" McCrary Award for Excellence in Journalism – Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation

2010 Military Reporters and Editors Awards – Overseas coverage (< 100,000 circulation)

Recipient: Jon Rabirow

2010 National Headline Awards – First Place: Public Service (Forcing Change) – Third Place: News Series (Coming Home: The Men of Triple Deuce)

2009 George Polk Awards in Journalism – George Polk Award for Military Reporting Recipients: Charles Reed, Leo Shane III and Kevin Baron

2007 Military Reporters and Editors Awards – Overseas coverage (< 100,000 circulation)
Recipient: Monte Morin

2006 Military Reporters and Editors Awards – Overseas coverage (< 100,000 circulation)

Recipients: Monte Morin, Joe Giordano; Honorable mention: Nancy Montgomery Photography: Fred Zimmerman

2005 Military Reporters and Editors Awards – Overseas coverage (< 100,000 circulation)

Recipient: Steve Lewis Photography: Terry Boyd

2004 American Legion Excellence in Journalism Award – Ground Truth Heroes

2003 Scripps Howard Foundation National Journalism Award – First Amendment, Finalist

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Nintendo's Mario to team up with Minions for film

By YURI KAGEYAMA

Associated Press

TOKYO — Mario is getting together with the Minions.

Japanese video-game company Nintendo Co. says a movie starring the plumber in the Super Mario franchise is in the works, co-produced with Chris Meledandri, the chief executive of Illumination Entertainment, the U.S. animation studio behind the popular "Despicable Me" series.

Nintendo's star game designer, Shigeru Miyamoto, told re-

porters Thursday the script is mostly finished. He's promising a "fun" movie, since Meledandri shares his thinking on creative projects.

The movie, two years in the making after a meeting between Meledandri and Miyamoto, is set for global distribution through Universal, which co-owns Illumination, according to the Kyoto-based maker of Pokémon games and the popular Switch machine.

They did not give other details, including the release date.

Miyamoto said some people mistakenly think that making games is similar to making movies.

"Creating in an interactive medium is totally different from doing that in a passive medium," he said, adding that he'd wanted to make such a film for years.

Meledandri and he hit it right off. "We want to make something great," he said.

Nintendo reported Wednesday an October-December profit of \$768 million, up 29 percent from the previous fiscal third quarter.

Quarterly sales ballooned to

nearly 483 billion yen, up from 174 billion yen the previous year, on the success of its Switch, a hybrid game machine that can be played both as a home console and as a handheld.

Nintendo now expects to sell 15 million Switch consoles through March. That's up from its initial projection to sell 10 million Switch machines, which was raised last year to 14 million.

Nintendo brought the world the FamiCom game machine in the 1980s and has had its up and downs as people's entertainment

tastes changed.

In recent years, Nintendo did an about-face to its past policy of shunning smartphone games and has scored success in that sector as well. It has brought back a revamped version of the FamiCom, which proved so popular it will go on sale again later this year.

Nintendo executives also expressed hopes for its upcoming Nintendo Labo, whose trailers shows the Switch being played with cardboard concoctions, resembling a piano, fishing rod, robot and other items.

Apple to respond to US probes in slowdown of old iPhones

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Apple is cooperating with U.S. government inquiries into its secret slowdown of old iPhones, further complicating its efforts to move past an issue that irked customers whose devices bogged down.

The company acknowledged the probes Tuesday after both the Wall Street Journal and Bloomberg reported the Justice Department and Securities and Exchange Commission were investigating how investors have been affected by Apple's handling of the situation.

A software update released in 2016 began to slow down older iPhones when their batteries

weakened to prevent them from abruptly turning off. But Apple didn't fully disclose what it was doing until December 2017.

Apple is replacing batteries on iPhone 6 models or later for \$29, a \$50 discount.

The company is working on another software update that will give consumers the option of turning off the slowdown feature if they are willing to risk a sudden shutdown. That free update, due out this spring, also will include a feature measuring the battery's strength.

In its latest statement, Apple reiterated its belief it was acting in the best interest of its customers by extending the lives of their iPhones. Many consumers, however, remain convinced

that the company torpedoned the older iPhones to prod them to upgrade to the latest models.

Authorities in France are in the midst of investigating whether Apple violated laws protecting consumers in that country, and lawyers in the U.S. are pursuing a variety of class-action lawsuits on behalf of millions of consumers.

Meanwhile, the head of the Commerce Committee in the Senate had sent a letter to Apple demanding more information about the slowdown. Apple was supposed to respond by Jan. 23 but was granted an extension and is now expected to answer by the end of this week, said Frederick Hill, a spokesman for Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., who confronted the company.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Feb. 2)	\$1.2765
Dollar buys (Feb. 2)	69.7834
British pound (Feb. 2)	\$1.46
Japanese yen (Feb. 2)	106.00
South Korean won (Feb. 2)	1,043.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.4202
Canada (Dollar)	1.2206
China (Yuan)	6.2990
Denmark (Krone)	5.9830
Egypt (Pound)	17.6300
Euro	\$1.2440/0.8039
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8198
Hungary (Forint)	249.38
Israel (Shekel)	3.4301
Japan (Yen)	109.51
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2997
Norway (Krone)	7.6908
Philippines (Peso)	51.68
Poland (Zloty)	3.34
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7511
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3128
South Korea (Won)	1,070.61
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9310
Thailand (Baht)	31.36
Turkey (New Lira)	3.7432

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	4.50
Discount rate	2.00
Federal funds market rate	1.40
3-month bill	2.05
30-year bond	2.96

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Germany	\$2.896	\$3.171	\$3.411	\$3.359
Change in price	+4.0 cents	+3.7 cents	+3.7 cents	+4.5 cents
Netherlands	--	\$3.674	\$3.815	\$3.784
Change in price	--	+3.4 cents	+3.2 cents	+3.1 cents
U.K.	--	\$3.116	\$3.356	\$3.304
Change in price	--	+3.7 cents	+3.7 cents	+4.5 cents
Azores	--	--	\$3.354	--
Change in price	--	--	+3.7 cents	--
Belgium	--	\$2.784	\$3.028	\$2.984
Change in price	--	+15.2 cents	+15.5 cents	+4.5 cents
Turkey	--	--	\$3.332	\$3.180*
Change in price	--	--	+3.7 cents	+4.5 cents
Italy	--	\$3.974	--	\$4.012
Change in price	--	+1.4 cents	--	+10.0 cents

AFRICAN GAS PRICES

Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Japan	--	\$3.159	--	\$3.099
Change in price	--	+4.0 cents	--	+4.0 cents
Okunawa	--	\$2.639	--	\$3.099
Change in price	--	+4.0 cents	--	+4.0 cents
South Korea	--	\$2.679	\$2.949	\$3.189
Change in price	--	+4.0 cents	+4.0 cents	+5.0 cents
Guam	--	\$2.669**	\$2.949	\$3.189
Change in price	--	+4.0 cents	+4.0 cents	--

* Diesel EFD ** Midgrade
For the week of Feb. 3-9

MARKET WATCH

	Jan. 31, 2018
Dow Jones Industrials	72.50
	26,149.39
Nasdaq composite	9.00
	7,411.48
Standard & Poor's 500	1.38
	2,823.81
Russell 2000	-7.84
	1,574.98

WEATHER OUTLOOK



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

WEEKEND



Track down
a new thriller
Books, Page 38

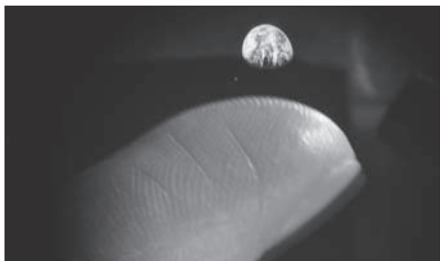


LA hip-hop's Main Street

For the past 30 years, essential West Coast rappers from N.W.A to the Grammy-winning Kendrick Lamar have used the 27 miles of Rosecrans Ave. as a backdrop. Many of their songs have been riddled with violence, a truth that hurts attempts to reframe Compton's image.

Page 24

WEEKEND: GADGETS & CHARTS



DAN SMALLEY LAB, BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY/AP

An image of the earth is projected above a fingertip in Provo, Utah.

New 3-D projection billed as better than hologram

By SETH BORENSTEIN
Associated Press

One of the enduring sci-fi moments of the big screen — R2-D2 beaming a 3-D image of Princess Leia into thin air in Star Wars — is closer to reality thanks to the smallest of screens: dust-like particles.

Scientists have figured out how to manipulate nearly unseen specks in the air and use them to create 3-D images that are more realistic and clearer than holograms, according to a recent study published in the journal Nature. The study's lead author, Daniel Smalley, said the new technology is "printing something in space, just erasing it very quickly."

In this case, scientists created a small butterfly appearing to dance above a finger and an image of a graduate student imitating Leia in the Star Wars scene.

Even with all sorts of holograms already in use, this new technique is the closest to replicating that Star Wars scene.

"The way they do it is really cool," said Curtis Broadbent, of the University of Rochester, who wasn't part of the study but works on a competing technology. "You can have a circle of people stand around it and each person would be able to see it from their own

perspective. And that's not possible with a hologram."

The tiny specks are controlled with laser light, like the fictional tractor beam from Star Trek, said Smalley, an electrical engineering professor at Brigham Young University. Yet it was a different science fiction movie that gave him the idea: The scene in the movie "Iron Man" when the Tony Stark character dons a holographic glove. That couldn't happen in real life because Stark's arm would disrupt the image.

Going from holograms to this type of technology — technically called volumetric display — is like shifting from a two-dimensional printer to a three-dimensional printer, Smalley said. Holograms appear to the eye to be three-dimensional, but "all of the magic is happening on a 2-D surface," Smalley said.

The key is trapping and moving the particles around potential disruptions — like Tony Stark's arm — so the "arm is no longer in the way," Smalley said.

So far the projections have been tiny, but with more work and multiple beams, Smalley hopes to have bigger projections.

This method could one day be used to help guide medical procedures — as well as for entertainment, Smalley said. It's still years away from daily use.

ON THE COVER: Rosecrans Ave. conjures a musical essence for many Compton, Calif.-area rappers that goes beyond the pavement itself.

KENT NISHIMURA, LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

GADGET WATCH

Personal heater safely warms small, large spaces

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

With winter in full swing, Honeywell has a few solutions to keep you warm in a small personal space, as well as heating up a single room.

The Honeywell two-position heater (model HHF175W, \$29.99), with fan-forced wire heating technology, is 1500-watt AC-powered.

A unique feature of this space heater allows it to be used in two different positions, standing vertically or played sideways. Either way, you'll get full functionality of all three settings: high heat (1500 watts), low heat (750 watts) or just run the fan with no heat.

There's a dial thermostat for temperature settings and overheat protections include two overheat sensors and a backup cut-off fuse.

It measures only 5.4-by-9.8-by-11.3 inches, so using it either on a floor or desktop are ideal. The Honeywell slim ceramic tower heater (HCE317B, \$54.99) is built just as the name describes it, like a tower with 8.74-by-6.69-by-21.65-inch dimensions.

It stands upright with a slim space-saving design and has the same heat settings as the two position heater, along with a few additional fea-



HONEYWELL/TNS

tures. You can have the fan oscillate to send the heat to a wide area, making it ideal for larger rooms.

A programmable thermostat comes in handy along with a timer you can set for 1, 2, 4 or 8-hour durations. It's also equipped with safety features against overheating and 360-degree tip-over protection.

Both heaters have a cool touch housing exterior, which means the outside will not get hot and cause burns.

Online: honeywellmvpuggedin.com

The Edifier MP200 (Bluetooth 4.1) speaker is portable and powerful.

The 2-inch-cubed speaker easily fits in the palm of your hand and is dust- and splash-proof (IP54 rating) along with a built-in microphone for handsfree calls.

A nice feature is the micro-SD memory card slot, which lets you load music into the speaker for a true handsfree, wireless device.

Answering calls and controlling the music or volume is done with three buttons on top of the speaker. A string can be attached to the speaker to hang it from a wall, doorknob or even carry around your neck or wrist.

Online: edifier.com; \$28.99, available in seven colors

The USA Gear Q series backpack is designed to carry enough camera equipment for an advanced amateur or even a professional heading out for a day of work.

Unlike many other camera backpacks I've tried, the QBK is not big and bulky, yet it still carries a decent amount of gear.

You can set up exactly what and where you want to carry everything since the inside compartments are completely adjustable with Velcro dividers, along with inside and outside zipper accessory compartments.

The inside pack and the dividers are a soft trikot scratch-resistant lining, allowing you to keep everything tight and padded for secure storage of the smallest accessories up to larger telephoto lenses.

The shoulder straps are padded and fully adjustable. Each side of the bag has a stretchable netted pocket.

What I liked most about this backpack is how much it stored in a low profile. The backpack isn't big and bulky, even when I filled it to the limit. It measures 15-by-13-by-5 inches and even has a compartment for a laptop up to 17 inches.

A rain cover is included, which folds up to store inside during dry conditions.

Online: usagear.com; \$49.99 at Amazon



The USA Gear Q series backpack is designed to carry enough camera equipment for amateurs or professionals.

USA GEAR/TNS

ITUNES MUSIC

The top 10 songs on iTunes for the week ending Jan. 25:

1. "God's Plan," Drake
2. "Perfect," Ed Sheeran
3. "Diplomatic Immunity," Drake
4. "Havana" (feat. Young Thug), Camila Cabello
5. "Meant to Be" (feat. Florida Georgia Line), Bebe Rexha
6. "Finesse" (Remix, feat. Cardi B), Bruno Mars
7. "Thunder," Imagine Dragons
8. "rockstar" (feat. 21 Savage), Post Malone
9. "No Name," NF
10. "Supplies," Justin Timberlake

— Compiled by AP

SPOTIFY MUSIC

The top 10 songs on Spotify for the week ending Jan. 25:

1. "God's Plan," Drake
2. "Havana" (feat. Young Thug), Camila Cabello
3. "rockstar" (feat. 21 Savage), Post Malone
4. "Finesse" (Remix, feat. Cardi B), Bruno Mars
5. "IDGAF," Dua Lipa
6. "River" (feat. Ed Sheeran), Eminem
7. "Never Be the Same," Camila Cabello
8. "Echame La Culpa," Luis Fonsi
9. "Let You Down," NF
10. "Him & I" (with Halsey), G-Eazy

— Compiled by Stars and Stripes

ITUNES MOVIES

The top 10 movies on iTunes for the week ending Jan. 28:

1. "Geostorm"
2. "Blade Runner 2049"
3. "American Made"
4. "Ghost in the Shell"
5. "Only the Brave"
6. "A Bad Moms Christmas"
7. "Dunkirk"
8. "The Foreigner"
9. "It"
10. "Thank You for Your Service"

— Compiled by AP

BOOKS

The top 10 books on Apple's iBook charts for the week ending Jan. 28:

1. "The Woman in the Window," A. R. J. Finn
2. "The Wife Between Us," Greer Hendricks & Sarah Pekkanen
3. "Forever My Girl," Heidi McLaughlin
4. "Fire and Fury," Michael Wolff
5. "Little Fires Everywhere," Celeste Ng
6. "Origin," Dan Brown
7. "12 Rules for Life," Jordan B. Peterson
8. "Darker," E. L. James
9. "Fall from Grace," Danielle Steel
10. "xo, Zach," Kendall Ryan

— Compiled by AP

APPS

The top 10 iPhone apps for the week ending Jan. 28:

1. Pocket Build
2. Goodnotes
3. Heads Up!
4. Minds On Physics the App — Part 1
5. The Room: Old Sins
6. Getting Over It
7. Pique Inc.
8. Geometry Dash
9. Bloons TD 5
10. NBA 2K18

— Compiled by AP

WEEKEND

CHECK IT OUT

Events, entertainment and other ways to fill your free time

1

Making waves:
More 'Blue Planet'

It's probably not anyone's highest viewing priority this weekend, but "Planet Earth: Blue Planet II" promises as much wonder and spectacle as that popular pigskin battle, and adds a dash of education.

The seven-part series about life in the Earth's oceans kicks off Saturday with an episode that includes walruses fighting over shrinking ice floes; humpback whales breaching en masse; and fish with bulgy foreheads that can change from female to male as they age. Sir David Attenborough narrates and presents the series, which is scored by Hans Zimmer. No matter what happens on the gridiron, this is bound to be the most amazing thing on television this weekend.

• 'Planet Earth: Blue Planet II' premieres Saturday on AFN-Spectrum.



Photos courtesy of BBC America

Above: Strict management of the herring fishery in Norway has saved it from complete collapse. The herring numbers are now so numerous, they have drawn in huge numbers of humpback whales and are thought to sustain perhaps the largest gatherings of orca anywhere in the world.

Left: "Planet Earth: Blue Planet II" narrator Sir David Attenborough visits a half-ton leatherback turtle in Trinidad.



2

'Last Flag Flying'
leaves no friend behind

If you're looking for DVD-and-chill time, "Last Flag Flying" is an excellent option. This tale of loyalty and friendship stars Steve Carell, Laurence Fishburne and Bryan Cranston as Vietnam War buddies who reunite to bury a son killed in the line of duty. On the journey, the men reminisce and come to terms with their shared memories of a war that continues to shape their lives.

• More new DVD releases on Page 39.



3

New thrillers heavy
on scandal, secrets

Are you still missing "Gone Girl"? Looking for the next "Girl on the Train"? Wishing to find something that reminds you of "Big Little Lies"? This year has already given thriller lovers a fistful of promising titles. Whether for yourself or your book club, we've got some ideas — and the right drinks to go with them.

• Book suggestions on Page 38.



4

Mirren shows royal
rap skills on late night

Dame Helen Mirren has played queens, witches and probably everything in between in her illustrious, decades-long acting career. In this weekend's new movie release, "Winchester," the Oscar winner plays an heiress to a fortune who feels she's haunted by victims of the famous firearm. During her promotional rounds, Mirren stopped by James Corden's "Late Late Show" to indulge in a rap-off in a Drop the Mic session.

• Watch it at tinyurl.com/yaw5k8n.



WEEKEND: MUSIC

Straight outta Compton

Rolling down Rosecrans Avenue, Los Angeles hip-hop's Main Street

By RANDALL ROBERTS
Los Angeles Times

Like Sunset Boulevard and rock or Beale Street and the blues, Compton's Rosecrans Avenue — described in song by producer-rapper DJ Quik as “a long-ass avenue that goes from the beach to the streets” — conjures a musical essence beyond the pavement itself.

If Compton is the heart of Los Angeles hip-hop, Rosecrans is its pulse.

Rosecrans has played a role as an incubator for essential LA rappers such as Kendrick Lamar, Dr. Dre, YG, the Game, DJ Quik, Problem and dozens more. Since N.W.A.'s 1988 album “Straight Outta Compton,” artists have long used the 27-mile-long avenue as a backdrop.

Yet whereas songs about Sunset Boulevard have tended to romanticize the sun-drenched Southern California ideal, those set 15 miles south on Rosecrans have been riddled with violence, a truth that frustrates attempts to reframe Compton's image.

You won't hear lyrics about the city's birth as the flood-prone midpoint between downtown Los Angeles and the LA harbor or about how in the 1940s a huge migration of African-Americans transformed South Los Angeles.

“Who blew up that McDonald's on Rosecrans and Central, dude,” King Tee wonders on his 1987 track with Mixmaster Spade and the Compton Posse, “Ya Better Bring a Gun,” which is the first known rap song to utter the avenue by name. The McDonald's is still there — right across from Tam's Burgers at Rosecrans and Central avenues.

“This is where I seen my second murder, actually,” Lamar, who won Grammys for best rap album, song, performance and rap/sung collaboration last weekend in New York, told Rolling Stone at Tam's Burgers in 2015. “Eight years old, walking home from McNair Elementary. Dude was in the drive-thru ordering his food, and homey ran up, boom boom — smoked him.”

Rosecrans in the age of hip-hop has

come to symbolize that which unites and divides its residents, the pathway that leads to and from salvation, a River Styx where both temptation and redemption lurk.

“Every spot in Compton got something going on, but Rosecrans is the common denominator,” says the 32-year-old Problem. “There's a lot to talk about, there's a lot to live about, there's a lot to say, there's a lot to represent.”

‘Gotta zoom’

On a recent Friday afternoon the Compton-raised rapper Problem was riding in the passenger side of a late-model BMW convertible as it tentatively exited the Tam's Burgers parking lot.

“You gotta zoom,” Problem, born Jason Martin, urgently says to the driver. “You see the tempo around here?”

In the same Tam's lot that Problem just left, jailed rap kingpin Marion “Suge” Knight is accused of striking two men with his truck, during an incident allegedly involving his portrayal in the N.W.A. biopic “Straight Outta Compton.” One of the men died.

Nominated for a Grammy for his role in co-writing rapper Rapsody's track “Sassy,” Problem has walked the Rosecrans tight-rope his whole life, so he understands how to navigate West Coast rap's most famous avenue.

Problem last year teamed with Quik for an



LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

N.W.A. in 1989. Back, from left: Yella, Dr. Dre and MC Ren. Front: Ice Cube and Eazy-E. The band's landmark 1988 album, “Straight Outta Compton,” set the stage for other rap artists to use the 27 miles of Rosecrans Avenue as a backdrop in their songs.



entire album dedicated to it. Called simply “Rosecrans,” it's a love letter to a rough-and-tumble road whose boundaries — visible and invisible — have connected and separated its citizenry.

Beginning at its eastern end at North Euclid in Fullerton, the avenue runs westbound through Norwalk, Clearwater, Compton, Gardena and Hawthorne before ending south of LAX in Manhattan Beach. Along the way, a few rusty-but-working wells pump oil, remnants of a time less than a century ago when this land was a vast but ultimately untenable oil field.

Across its expanse through South LA, Rosecrans now serves as

home to hundreds of small businesses, Osman's Surplus, Canary World Exotic Bird Farm, Salon de Leon, King Palace Buffet, Mr. Rosewood Restaurant, Donut King, Express Pawn Shop and Paramount Campers among them.

As anyone who's heard West Coast rap in the past three decades knows, at its midpoint Rosecrans passes through the heart of gangland LA, serving as a boundary that divides turf among various gangs.

“When I'm riding down Rosecrans you never know what you can see,” sings Candice Boyd during the hook for DJ Quik and Problem's “Rosecrans” title track. “R.I.P. while you riding down Rosecrans.”

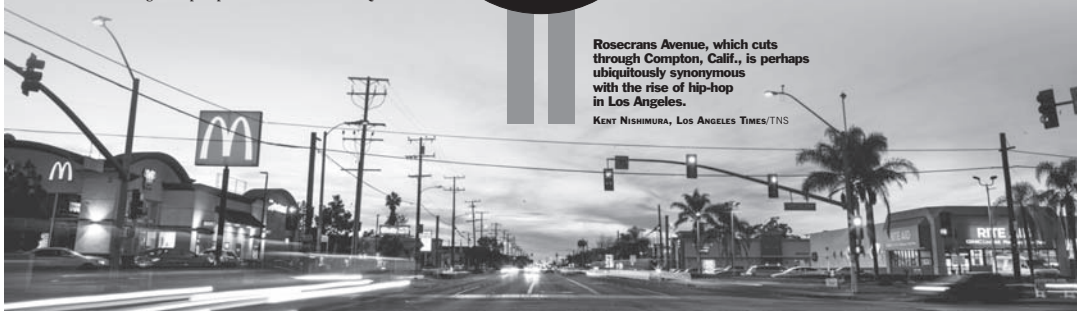
“I'm on Rosecrans ... at Tam's Burgers — I'm buying AKs and handguns,” raps YG on “Bompton,” describing his aim to “do the enemies foul.”

“Come and visit the tire-screaming, ambulance, policeman / Won't you spend a weekend on Rosecrans,” raps Lamar on “Compton,” a breakout track from his 2012 album, “good kid, m.A.A.d. city,” describing the “khaki creasing, crime increasing on Rosecrans.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

Rosecrans Avenue, which cuts through Compton, Calif., is perhaps ubiquitously synonymous with the rise of hip-hop in Los Angeles.

KENT NISHIMURA, LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS



WEEKEND: MUSIC

Sites that get shout-outs

By Randall Roberts and Priya Krishnakumar/Los Angeles Times

Since the rise of rap in the 1980s, Rosecrans Ave has served as the music's West Coast spiritual home. Extending 27 miles from Fullerton to its end at Pacific Coast Highway in Manhattan Beach, the street, named after a Union soldier, has been an actor in songs by Kendrick Lamar, YG, Problem, DJ Quik, 2Pac and dozens of others. Here's an overview of addresses and locations that have served as backdrops for rhymed drama.

1. McDonald's. The earliest known mention of Rosecrans in a rap song arrived in 1987 via King Tee's "Ya Better Bring a Gun." Featuring a bouncy but menacing old-school beat, the track helped define the neighborhood in bloody 1980s Compton by warning would-be tourists to arrive well armed: "From block to block everybody's bad / And if you don't know where you're at, then your life's been had." Near the end of the track, almost as an afterthought, the rapper wonders aloud on an unsolved mystery: "Who blew up that McDonald's on Central and Rosecrans, dude?"

2. Tam's Burgers. From a historical perspective, the little spot at the corner of Rosecrans and Central avenues is the center. "I grew up off Rosecrans and Central / Tam's Burger on the corner," raps J3 in the Game's track "Support Compton." In

"Compton State of Mind," Kendrick Lamar recalls "the good old days / Eating Tam's Burgers while my Juvenile Bud had played." Most recently, Compton rap star YG celebrates the restaurant in his track "Bompton" by setting himself "on Rosecrans ... at Tam's Burgers / I'm buying AK's and handguns."

3. Food 4 Less. During the musical interlude "Real" from Lamar's "good kid, m.A.A.d city," the artist's mother is captured in a voice recording. "Look, the neighbors say they seen you and your little friends over there by Food 4 Less," she says, then plays a message about his label Top Dawg.

4. Gonzales Park. For "Sing About Me, I'm Dying of Thirst," Lamar inhabits the perspective of a prostitute working out of the Rosecrans-adjacent park. Lamar-as-hooker describes being in the Gonzales Park

lot and being followed "by a married man, and father of three" who's a favorite client because he tips her in MDMA pills.

5. Intersection of Rosecrans and Arabe. The longtime Compton producer and rapper DJ Quik has been a neighborhood chronicler for more than 25 years. On "Scanless," from his 1991 album "Quik Is the Name," he and his collaborators document lawless action up and down Rosecrans but cite this intersection in particular.

6. Tacos Mexico. On the 2017 album "Rosecrans," the rapper Problem offers some sage advice for rivals: "Get out the way — you ain't got no business this side of Santa Fe," he raps, a reference to a crucial north-south avenue that separates gang factions. Like most major intersections in South L.A., it's occupied by fast-food joints, gas stations or strip malls. In this case, the

intersection is home to the midsize chain Tacos Mexico.

7. Church's Chicken. The Atlanta-based fried chicken chain is one of many fast-food joints appearing in songs about Compton. Lamar references it in two tracks. In "Money Trees," Lamar's bloody Mary raps about Compton's most prominent public space. "Don't get caught in the Jungles or a park called Luaders." Freestyle "he suggests to an unnamed other to park their car" in front of Luaders next to that Church's Chicken.

8. Compton Swap Meet. This vanished landmark has served as a setting for songs by Lamar, Nipsey Hussle, the Game, Mack 10, Snoop and others. Often used in reference to the movie bootlegs and the mistakes acquired within, in the Compton Swap Meet was most famously immortalized in a skit on Dr. Dre's classic album "The Chronic." For his part, Lamar promises in "Wesley's Theory" that someday soon he's going to "put the Compton Swap Meet by the White House."

9. Luaders Park. The 1993 song "Piru Love" — a reference to a Compton street and a Blood-affiliated gang

— by the rap group Bloods & Crips offers a primer on the many gang chapters running Rosecrans, and their warning features one of the earliest shout-outs to Luaders Park.

"Every town has an Elm Street but not a Freddy Krenue as a bloody Mary raps about Compton's most prominent public space. "Don't get caught in the Jungles or a park called Luaders."

10. Rosecrans Avenue. Even more so than specific map points, Rosecrans asserts itself in dozens more songs as an ideal, a kind of secret handshake among the Compton-proud musicians. Most famously, 2Pac's Dr. Dre-produced "California Love" helped codify the avenue as a major spot. In it, he called on fans "world-wide, let them recognize from Long Beach to Rosecrans / Bumpin' and grindin' like a slow jam." Chicago rapper Lupe Fiasco echoed that line on his 2011 track "Joquin Phoenix," and Grammy-nominated lyricist Rasputin's 2013 track "Complacent" featured her rhyming "rollin' on Rosecrans" with "La-La Land, a Kobe fan."

5 songs that helped define West Coast rap's main street

You can learn a lot about a place by the ways in which it's treated in song. With Compton in general and Rosecrans Avenue in particular, the lyrical lessons mostly involve themes foreign to those unfamiliar with the terrain. Below, five crucial songs that have helped define West Coast rap's boulevard of dreams.

Jimmy Webb, "Rosecrans Boulevard" (1967). It's not a boulevard, it's an avenue, but other than that, the famed songwriter accurately conveys what one stretch of Rosecrans might have been like in the mid-1960s.

First recorded by the Fifth Dimension, the song traces a story that begins as the narrator drives south on "that long freeway toward San Diego," presumably Interstate 5. His memory of a woman he calls "Rosecrans Boulevard" is stirred by an exit sign. "One night on Manhattan Beach I said their things I thought I was told to say," he sings. "Then I held her close and died her tears."

Bloods & Crips, "Piru Love" (1993). In the wake of N.W.A.'s success in the late 1980s, a mixed posse of rival gang members united under one banner to issue two albums. The anthem in the bunch was "Piru Love," a rapped recitation that listed the many gang chapters occupying South Los Angeles at the time.

Scored by a crawling G-funk beat and robotic Vocoder accompaniment, the track celebrates all things Compton — and offers a history of gangland L.A. in the process. Across dozens of couplets, the group plays tour guide: "On Rosecrans pass Oleander at the light / Tree Top is to the left, Fruit Town is on the right," Bloody Mary raps.

YG, "Bompton" (2014). "Bompton" is accident rapper YG's tag-team effort with DJ Mustard. The 2014 track sees YG buying guns at Tam's Burgers, insulting an enemy's mom for "looking like she do crystal," buying helicopters and avoiding (and) press interviews "cause criminals don't like talking."

That's probably just as well, because in another track, "Gangbang," he admits to being a conspicuous presence "walking down Rosecrans looking like I stole something."

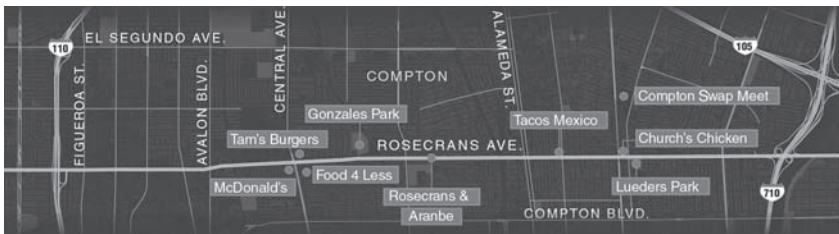
Dr. Dre feat. the Game, "Just Another Day" (2015). Anyone who follows music culture knows the connection between self-made billionaire Dr. Dre and Compton — he even listed his most recent album "Compton." An ode to his birth city, the album features a host of guests.

Among them is the Game, who, until the rise of Kendrick Lamar, was Compton's most successful non-N.W.A. rapper. A prolific lyricist, the Game has namedropped Compton across his career, and in "Just Another Day," he recalls the times he's "been shot, robbed, stabbed, chased home, nose caved in by a cop." He's waiting by his Cadillac, ready for whatever comes his way, "on Rosecrans with a Glock in both hands."

Problem & DJ Quik feat. the Game, "Rosecrans" (2017). A track that unites three key Compton rappers, the title song from Problem and DJ Quik's album-length ode to Rosecrans is set on the avenue itself. As sung by Candice Boy, the refrain sees the artists cruising with the windows up, smoking weed and tipping from a bottle.

"Cause we're riding on Rosecrans," Boyd sings. "I'm high, like when I'm rolling on a bridge / ... You know what it is / When I'm riding down Rosecrans."

Randall Roberts
Los Angeles Times



FROM PAGE 24

A measure of Rosecrans' potency? One of Compton's most famous contemporary musicians, YG, tends to steer clear of the avenue these days. In 2015, the rapper was shot outside his North Hollywood studio, and the perpetrator has never been found. Citing "concerns for his safety," the rapper declined to be interviewed or photographed on Rosecrans (he ultimately canceled a scheduled phone interview).

That hasn't stopped him from documenting Compton's main artery: "And I ride the main line, up and down Rosecrans I'm gonna shine," he raps on "GSPB," a track that transposes images of him celebrating on the avenue with others of him threatening prostitutes and boasting of his pimping.

Power struggle

Yet it's perhaps no wonder the city's contemporary music documents turf wars, gunplay and hometown pride.

Why Compton? The traits are in the DNA. In Compton in the 1960s and '70s, the mostly white suburban enclave, says Tyree Boyd-Pates, history curator and program manager at the California African American Museum. At the time, the city's engineers were what he describes as "white gangs that terrorized blacks and Latinos" and "very similar to what black people were leaving the South with the KKK." As Compton integrated — a shift exacerbated by the 1965 Watts uprising

— what evolved in the 1970s and '80s, says Boyd-Pates, was "the hyper-criminalization of those African Americans" by the justice system. One byproduct of this power struggle was an emboldened community whose voices were eager to vent in rhymed couplets.

Growing up inside this system, Boyd-Pates contends, "allowed for the Dr. Dres and the Eazy-Es who were coming up in that age to solidify their identity as the messengers of the streets. And they were able to embody and encapsulate what it meant to be a black male."

"You gotta understand," Problem says as the BMW moves eastbound on Rosecrans, "the mentality of someone that lives here has to be different than when you live other places, just from the history of it. And it breeds a different type of thinker."

Despite all the lyrical gunplay and criminality depicted in music about Compton, says Boyd-Pates, the city remains "a really important place for black Angelenos, because it is the one place where they've felt that they've gotten an opportunity to fulfill the American dream."

He adds, "It's a really amazing city that doesn't get its due because of the negative portrayals that followed it for the last 20 years."

When Problem and Quik decided to expand their 2016 release "Rosecrans EP" into an album, says Problem, the ideas

"It just sparked up so many conversations and different experiences he had on certain parts of Rosecrans, and the ones I've had, and the ones we've had together." Problem said. (DJ Quik declined to be interviewed.)

The album's title track captures the breadth of the avenue's allure, beginning with singer Boyd's confession that she's cruising with the windows rolled up because she and her companions are smoking weed "as we're riding down Rosecrans."

Rapper the Game offers a specific location to where he and his comrades Big Fase, Frog Dog, Bad Ass and Chuck are headed: "Dippin' down the Crans, right on Wilmington, right on Brazil."

Rappers aren't the only artists to have focused on Rosecrans. The first known song to reference it, in fact, was Los Angeles chronicler Jimmy Webb with his "Rosecrans Boulevard."

Best known for his cake-in-the-rain ode to "MacArthur Park" 12 years away, in 1967 Webb offered his song to the top band the Fifth Dimension. Although it's an avenue, Webb turns it into a boulevard for a tale about a hotel tryout with a stewardess.

In the intervening half-century, Rosecrans evolved. Today, Webb and his stewardess may have opted for an Airbnb in Venice.

"Everywhere changes," Problem says. "The look of it, yeah, the feel of it. It's going to always be different from the generations prior."

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

An emotional journey

'Finding Paradise,' sequel to 'To the Moon' and 'A Bird Story,' a touching, brilliantly designed, story-driven adventure game



By Christopher Byrd
Special to The Washington Post

For much of their history, video games have inspired conversations about emotions such as loneliness, regret, or the nagging sense of time wasted. (This is not a judgment against games, simply an observation — who hasn't heard a story about a "World of Warcraft" shut-in?)

Usually, these discussions occur in the form of stories about why some people seek solace in games. They also speak to the potential indirect effects that can arise from dwelling in virtual worlds for too long. Seldom, however, are such emotions addressed head-on in games, save for a cutscene that might show a character going through a rough patch.

Notable outliers include games like "Dear Esther,"

"Night in the Woods" and "Lydia," which deal with themes of alienation. Other exceptions include the games of Kan Gao. Gao's work explores how some people deal with loneliness or disappointment. They are also among the more life-affirming titles out there.

Gao is one of the auteurs of the gaming industry, juggling the responsibilities of writer, director and composer. He wears his love of 16-bit Japanese-style role playing games on his sleeve as can be seen from the beautiful pixel art in his games. To his retro aesthetic Gao adds a potent mixture of humor and sentiment.

Gao's 2011 game "To the Moon" introduced players to Eva Rosalene and Neil Watts, two doctors who explore the consciousness of dying patients while burnishing their repertaire. As employees of Sigmund Corps, the doctors work to grant their patients a final wish, something that can only be experienced during their last moments

— when their lives flash before them — but that appears real nonetheless.

To perform their jobs, the doctors use proprietary technology to access their patients' key memories to retrieve mementos or memory markers from important moments in their lives. The doctors use these to reconstruct a path for their machine to follow the memories. Then, with a bit of technological voodoo, they create an artificial memory that causes a ripple effect throughout the patient's chain of memories to fulfill his wish.

"To the Moon," which told the story of a man's wish to find peace among the stars, was the first game I played that elicited a near teary-eyed response when I finished it. (In fact, there is a YouTube clip of popular streamers misting up.)

Since "To the Moon's" release, there have been two mini-episodes about interpersonal incidents that occur over one day during the holidays at Sigmund Corps. An action performed by Dr. Watts during one of these mini-episodes has consequences that appear in Gao's newest game, "Finding Paradise."

This recently released full-fledged sequel was preceded by "A Bird Story" (2014), a short, vibrant tale about a lonely boy who befriends an injured bird. The boy, Colin, grows into the patient whose last wish is at the center of "Finding Paradise."

Colin's final wish is for the doctors to grant him a more fulfilling life while changing as few of his memories as possible. Like many, he has an inarticulate ache for something more. Soon after the doctors begin exploring Colin's memories, they are surprised to find that they jump from one of Colin's most recent memories to a memory of him as a child.

Normally the accumulation of mementos causes them to proceed steadily backward from old age to childhood. The explanation for why they jump from the patient's mature years to his younger years and vice versa — in "the pattern of a decaying orbit" — is part of a mystery involving the unique way that Colin coped with problems — by retreating into his imagination.

As the doctors close in on the crux of Colin's compensatory/defense mechanism, they watch memories of poignant scenes from Colin's life. From his childhood years, they discover his regret over his lack of artistic talent; from his time as a newlywed, they see his embarrassment over spilling a drink on his wife during their honeymoon; and from his later years, they notice his longing for grandchildren. These episodes are interspersed with incidents of a more emotionally ambiguous nature such as Colin's first professional flight as an airline pilot where he had to put up with his supervisor's highhandedness or watching his wife's final musical performance at their local community theater.

"Finding Paradise" is constructed around simple point-and-click game mechanics, though there are a couple of lighthearted segments that turn the game into an innocuous shooter or otherwise reference other video game tropes. (There really are a lot of funny moments.) Although I've read some reviewers grouse that the game's story and overall emotional payoff are not on par with "To the Moon," I found "Finding Paradise" all the more endearing for its restraint leading up to a big reveal.

At one point the doctors wonder why they don't encounter any memories from their client's photo album — a repository of happy incidents — but this game makes the point that the more ordinary moments are truly what define us. I found it all wonderfully low key.

Platforms: PC, Mac

Online: freebirdgames.com/finding-paradise

Two doctors traverse through the memories of a dying man to fulfill his last wish in "Finding Paradise."

Photos courtesy of Freebird Games



Many staff-written game reviews at stripes.com/games

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Europe

City of conquerors

Oderzo, Italy, survived Romans and barbarians

By KENT HARRIS
Stars and Stripes

One of the most famous quotes attributed to Julius Caesar is “Veni, vidi, vici.” In English, that’s: “I came, I saw, I conquered.”

Caesar said that about a battle he won in Turkey during a Roman civil war. The people of Oderzo, a northern Italian city that’s about halfway between Aviano Air Base and Venice, supported Caesar in that war around 48 B.C. and earned Roman citizenship for doing so.

Many others could have used the phrase themselves later about Oderzo. The barbarian attacks that eventually destroyed the empire hit Oderzo hard. The Lombards came along in 639 and left little behind. It was rebuilt, though, and changed hands frequently during the next 1,000 or so years

with various kingdoms taking and losing control — mostly by force.

But Oderzo, which got its name from an original Latin reference to “market town,” has bounced back time and again. There are still some signs of Roman habitation and the Museo Archeologico Eno Bellis displays material from pre-Roman times as well.

Remnants of Roman roads and structures dot the city’s historic core along the Monticano River. But viewing them takes more imagination than at some other spots in Italy, thanks partly to the various invaders.

Tourists who do come view the ruins, check out the Duomo (cathedral) and stroll through the cobblestoned streets of the old city.

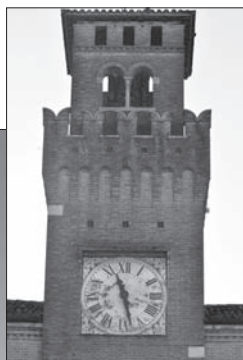
And today, Oderzo is generally spared visits by the barbarian (and/or tourist) hordes. It tends to

come alive once each week, though.

Several dozen vendors come to town to sell a plethora of merchandise on Wednesdays while spread out along pedestrian areas downtown. Most Italian cities of any size have a weekly market day, but Oderzo’s is larger than most near Aviano.

So it is certainly possible to come, see and conquer at the market — getting some great ingredients for a home-cooked meal or two, for instance — as long as you bring along some euros.

Harris.kent@stripes.com



ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

Oderzo is located about 37 kilometers (40 minutes) south of Aviano Air Base on the SR 53, along one of several routes that people can travel to Venice via rural roads. The easiest way from Aviano is to travel through Vigonovo toward Sacile, turning left at the traffic circle at the entrance to the industrial park, then following that road under the A28 until it ends in Prata di Pordenone. Turn right onto the SP 35, which changes names a few times before entering Oderzo. Follow the signs for “centro” when in Oderzo.

TIMES

If you like local markets, come on a Wednesday morning. If you like museums and art, Fridays or the weekends are better. The Museo Archeologico Eno Bellis and Alberto Martini Pinacoteca (a picture gallery in the same building) are open from 2-7 p.m. Fridays-Sundays.

COSTS

It costs 6 euros for a ticket to the museum. Parking gets scarce on market day, but there are several small lots near the hospital (a few blocks from downtown) that are free. It doesn’t cost anything to check out the scattered Roman ruins in the city or stroll the pedestrian walkways.

FOOD

Oderzo isn’t known for any particular kind of food. It’s not far from a top Italian wine area to the west, though. Vino raboso is produced nearby. There are lots of good take-home options (cheese, meats and seafood, fresh pasta, fruits and vegetables) at the market. Ristorante Gellius is well-regarded, though it’s not cheap.

INFORMATION

The tourist office has recently moved and isn’t easy to find. It’s located a few blocks from the archeological museum on Via Garibaldi. English spoken. Maps and brochures are available. It’s open Wednesdays 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Thursdays 3:30-6:30 p.m. and Fridays and Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 3:30-6:30 p.m. Phone: 0422-815251. Email: iat@comune.oderzo.tv.it Web: comune.oderzo.tv.it (in Italian).

— Kent Harris



PHOTOS BY KENT HARRIS/Stars and Stripes

Above: A statue on one of the two bridges that span the Monticano River in Oderzo, Italy, gazes toward the downtown area and away from the countryside and snow-topped mountains that loom on the horizon. Inset: The clock tower that tops the original city hall in Oderzo rises above the piazza that runs in front of the city’s cathedral and is one of a series of squares at the heart of the city.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

Europe's convents offer tranquility and treats

Once, while traveling in the 1970s, the youth hostel where I had planned to stay was full and the staff directed me to a nearby convent instead. As I walked there, I wondered if I was signing myself up for draconian curfews, spartan accommodations and Mass at dawn.

I shouldn't have worried—it turned out to be a beautiful, warmly welcoming and deeply restful experience. Yes, it was austere compared to a hotel, but it had everything I needed, was exquisitely clean and didn't require even a bedside prayer.

Around Europe, particularly in Spain and Italy, convents provide tranquil and often economical sleeping quarters. They can also be a way to tap into a deeply ingrained cultural heritage. In the past, many rich Europeans sent a daughter or two to a convent to live with nuns, where they excelled at needlework and baking—skills still practiced today. Today, overnight guests can still get a taste of life as a Polish nun in Rome, spend some time in a serene monastery garden or buy some cookies from a sequestered nun in Spain.

To find convent accommodations, try an aggregator such as Monastery Stays or Paradores of Spain. St. Patrick's Church in Rome, home to the Catholic American Community of Rome, also lists places throughout Italy. These days some religious orders have third parties run their guesthouses as businesses, but there are plenty of convents where the nuns themselves manage the hospitality.

At Casa di Santa Brigida in Rome, for example, the nuns are five-star-caliber hosts. This lavish 20-room convent—with a library, roof garden and pearls gaped instead of doors—makes tourists feel like they've died and gone to heaven. With soft-spoken sisters gliding down polished hallways, it's a peaceful retreat

in the middle of crusty, medieval Rome—though it's not as economical as most convent stays (about \$230 a night).

Many convents offer only twin beds, and English can be in short supply. Accommodations can feel restrictive to those used to hotels; check-in hours can



Rick Steves

be limited and some places enforce curfews (say, around 11:30 p.m.). You'll need to respect the rules of the house. But the advantages of staying in these peaceful places can more than make up for the drawbacks. Many are great deals in amazing locations. In many key Catholic cities, a grand bishop's palace—historically owned by the church—stands near the cathedral. Nowadays, these former palaces can be ideal spots to spend the night. For example, right above Assisi's famed Basilica of St. Clare is St. Anthony's Guest House, where the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement offer a serene welcome within the old city walls.

Convents can have wonderful ambience. You might climb into bed in your simple room next to a 500-year-old fresco peeking through the whitewash on the wall—then wake in the morning to the sound of sisters singing hymns. Convents commonly feature walled gardens—dreamy oases where guests may wander and rest.

To nourish your sweet tooth along with your soul, look for nun-baked pastries—especially common in Spain. In Avila, local nuns make pastries called yemas—soft-boiled egg yolks that have been



Courtesy of ricksteves.com

Nuns throughout Spain bake and sell specialty treats, like these almond cakes in Santiago de Compostela. The sisters are cloistered behind spiky window grilles.

cooled and sugared.

Arcos de la Frontera, one of Andalusia's white hill towns, has just one convent still in operation. Here, the sisters are cloistered from the public behind no-nonsense, spiky window grilles with tiny peepholes in the latticework for the nuns to see through. Visitors stepping into the lobby find a one-way mirror and a spinning cupboard that hides the nuns from view. On request, one of the sisters will spin out some boxes of excellent, freshly baked nut-studded cookies or cupcakes.

For centuries, most of Toledo's almond-fruity-sweet mazapan was made at local convents—but with the city's population

of nuns dwindling, it's become difficult to get this treat directly from the source. Fortunately, area convents still supply mazapan to El Café de las Monjas, a pastry and coffee shop. For a sweet and romantic evening moment, pick some up and head down to the Plaza del Ayuntamiento, where you can nibble your treats on a bench in front of Spain's best-looking city hall while admiring the country's most magnificent cathedral—built back when Toledo was Spain's capital—shining brightly against the black night sky.

Rick Steves (ricksteves.com) writes European travel guidebooks and hosts travel shows on public television and public radio. Email him at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.

TOP TRAVEL PICKS

Carnival parades in Viareggio, Italy

The coastal town of Viareggio in northern Tuscany is the site of one of Italy's favorite activities at carnival time, a vibrant parade staged five times over the festive period and typically attracting more than half a million spectators.

The fantasy, scale and detail of the papier-mache floats circling the city's waterfront promenade lead the parade its unique appeal. Themes are inspired by politics and current affairs in Italy and on the world stage. The floats compete to be named the best in several categories.

Spectators get into the carnival spirit by donning costumes and dancing to the music blaring from the floats. Keep an eye out for the parade's mascot, the clownish Buriamacco, unmistakable in his black cape and red and white suit, along with other figures from classical theater. Folkloric bands and elaborately masked performers complete the parade's cast of characters.

Parades take place from 3 p.m. on Feb. 4 and Feb. 11 and from 5 p.m. on Feb. 13 and Feb. 17.

The last parade is followed by fireworks and the reading of the jury's verdict as to best floats.



Karen Bradbury

Read more about things to do in the Europe Traveler blog: stripes.com/blogs/europe-traveler

Entry tickets cost 20 euros (\$24.70) for adults and 15 euros for youth; children shorter than 3 feet 10 inches enter free. Tickets in tribute seating cost an additional 15 euros per seat. Details at viareggio.ilcarnevale.com.

Light festival in Ghent, Belgium

The medieval gem of a city that is Ghent, Belgium, offers a study in contrasts through the weekend, as works of local and international light artists are showcased against the facades of its ancient buildings.

Thirty-seven light projects and installations, many of which

are interactive, will dazzle and provoke thought at the Lichtfestival Gent. The festival, now in its fourth edition, branches out beyond the historical center and the Arts Quarter by bathing industrial landmarks in light.

The displays can be experienced along a four-mile walking route from the Baudelohof to Sint Pietersplein. While there's no official start or end point, visitors must move in the same direction. Things to check out might include live DJ sessions and video mapping against the walls of a power plant, the post-apocalyptic multimedia installation of recycled goods titled "Octopus Garden," or a "fire tornado" towering more than 50 feet.

Festival hours are 7 p.m.-midnight on all days through Feb. 4. Entry is free. Additional info at lichtfestival.stad.gent.

Beer Festival in Bruges, Belgium

Winter doesn't get in the way of a spirited outdoor beer festival held each February in beautiful Bruges, Belgium. Eighty-eight brewers, overwhelmingly local or from other parts of the country, proudly present the fruits of their labors at this year's edition of the Bruges Beer Festival.

Styles being poured range



Courtesy of ilcarnevale.com

The fantasy, scale and detail of the papier-mache floats in the carnival parade in Viareggio, Italy, give the event its unique appeal.

from the souz guezue to punch-packing Trappists to browns and everything in between, with more than 400 beers available for tasting.

The festival spills across the market square, Burg Square and the Belfry, all of which are just a couple minutes' walk from one another. Food stands on site offer warm snacks, and non-alcoholic beverages are available, too.

Those who want to sample the beers can choose from two packages. The first option includes the 2018 edition of the mandatory 15-centiliter tasting glass, a pre-stamped postcard, a guide to

the beers and five tokens worth one tasting each and costs 15 euros (\$18.50).

A second package offers two glasses, the postcard, guide and 11 tokens; this goes for 30 euros. Either can be purchased on the ground floor of the Belfry. Additional tokens cost 2 euros each.

Festival hours are noon-10 p.m. Feb. 3 and 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Feb. 4. There is no entry fee. To travel to the festival in style, board a horse-drawn carriage from the city's train station and enjoy a tasting of Augustijn beer en route.

Online: brugsbierfestival.be.

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Europe



PHOTOS BY DAN STOUTAMIRE/Stars and Stripes

Workers prepare burgers at Five Guys in Frankfurt. The American chain opened its first restaurant in Germany in December. A second location has since been opened in Essen.

After Hours: Germany

By DAN STOUTAMIRE
Stars and Stripes

For more than a month and a half, Germans have been treated to one of the fastest-growing and most popular American burger chains: Five Guys. A location in Frankfurt's Zeil shopping district opened in early December, drawing lines that snaked around the block. After a recent lunch there, I can happily say that despite the distance from the chain's first location in Arlington, Va., the burgers and fries are just as good as those found in the States.

Situated in the heart of Frankfurt's large pedestrian zone — just outside the busy Hauptwache subway stop — this Five Guys is Germany's first. A second location has since been opened in Essen.

Though the food is much more expensive than that found at the usual fast-food chains — a burger, regular fries and medium soft drink set me back about 14 euros (\$17.40) — the prices compare favorably to sit-down restaurants, and the portions, especially the fries, are very generous.

The setup of the Frankfurt restaurant is unmistakably modern, and the service is fast. My order took only about five minutes to whip up. Customers can choose from more than 100 soft drink combinations and flavors at three automated drink stations. The variety extends to the food menu. Patrons can order burgers with custom extras, choosing any or all of 15 toppings and sauces. Hot dogs,



The chain's famous french fries are fresh cut and fried to order.

FIVE GUYS

Location: Zeil 127, Frankfurt, Germany 60313
Hours: 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Sundays-Thursdays; 11 a.m.-12 a.m. Fridays and Saturdays
Prices: Hot dogs, sandwiches and burgers cost 4.75-9.95

euros (\$5.90-\$12.30); fries cost 3.25-5.75 euros; drinks cost 2.50-5.95 euros
Information: Phone: (+49) (0) 69153-41260, website: fiveguys.de

— Dan Stoutamire

veggie sandwiches, BLTs and grilled cheese sandwiches are also available. Employees, in my experience, all spoke English well and were helpful when guiding first-timers through the ordering process.

While the burger was delicious, the best part of the meal was definitely the fries. The chain is famous for the side, and while variety is a calling card on the rest of their menu, they

remain the sole side option. I ordered a regular-size fries and it defeated me. It's probably best to share that and the large size among at least two or three people.

If you find yourself in Frankfurt and feeling nostalgic for a good American-style burger and fries, Five Guys should certainly be at the top of your list.

stoutamire.dan@stripes.com
Twitter: @DKS_Stripes

Food forecasts say we will be eating things we have barely heard about

It's amusing to scan the food and dining trend forecasts that pop up at the beginning of each year.

Let's start by agreeing that the future cannot be predicted with 100 percent accuracy. Still, nearly every tea-leaf reader in the food industry agrees: Vegetables and plant-based foods (aka meat substitutes) will continue to be hot. From there, it's pretty much anything goes.

McCormick & Co., the spice and flavorings giant, has been issuing its McCormick Flavor Forecast since 2000. This year's edition takes its cues from carts, trucks and food halls worldwide. It says we should expect to see desert versions of bao (China's soft steamed buns) and gyros-filled arepas. Ethiopian berbere spice blend (paprika, allspice, coriander, ginger, cinnamon, cardamom and red pepper) and Japanese furikake (seaweed, sesame, sugar, salt and dried seafood) seasoning will be the new essential flavor enhancements. On the subject of do-it-yourself meals, the hot pot — with nods to central Mexico and the West Indies — will continue to gain steam.

The soothsayers at Whole Foods Market predict that we'll be seeing more puffed and popped snacks ("popped cassava chips, puffed pasta bow ties and seaweed fava chips") and that variations on shakshuka will be front and center on menus everywhere. The taco will continue its evolution ("think seaweed wrappers with poke filling") and harissa will spice up cooking. On the cocktail front, elderflower will become prominent as floral flavors grab the spotlight.

Just as Pantone recently announced that "Ultra Violet" is its color of the year, Flavorman, the Kentucky-based custom beverage development company, is betting on a single flavor to reign supreme in 2018. That standard-bearer? Maple.

The sweet scent of spring and uniquely North American ingredient is the top trending flavor for the upcoming year," the company says. "It is famous for its complex sweetness and unmatched flavor. More recently, it is front and center for its role as an alternative sweetener and extensive health and nutritional benefits."

"Change Is the New Black" is the title of the 2018 trend report from San Francisco-based restaurant industry consultants Andrew Freeman & Co. They envision more Jewish delis and borscht-beef chicken, from rotisserie to fried, will be grabbing chefs' and consumers' attention

as never before.

Now in its sixth year, a national survey conducted by Today's Dietitian magazine and Pollock Communications ranks what 2,000-plus registered dietitians consider 2018's top 10 superfoods. Fermented foods (yogurt, kefir, kombucha, sauerkraut, kimchi and others) grabbed the top berth, hailed for their "powerful health benefits, from boosting gut health to blunting inflammation."

The remaining rankings, in descending order, include avocado, seeds, nuts, green tea, ancient grains, kale, exotic fruits, coconut products and salmon.

Expect to see dessert versions of bao and gyros-filled arepas. Ethiopian berbere spice blend and Japanese furikake will be the new essential flavor enhancements.

Extrapolating from the demand he's observing from his nationwide client base, farmer Lee Jones, operator of the Chef's Garden in Huron, Ohio, believes that 2018 will be all about uncommon herbs (lemon bergamot, lovage and nepitella

mint), flowers with flavor (white pea blossoms, borage blossoms and begonias) and produce with uniquely shaped leaves (citrus lace and Calvin pea tendrils) making their way onto plates.

The Specialty Food Association's six-member "trendspotting panel" has decreed that "upcycled" products — created from ingredients and scraps that might otherwise be discarded — will be on the rise.

"We're already seeing pressed juice made from imperfect fruit, chips made from fruit pulp and snack bars made from spent grain from the beer-making process," reads their report.

They're also leaning into Filipino cuisine, which they feel has been overshadowed in the U.S. by Thai and Vietnamese. So-called "Goth food," led by activated charcoal, which is being touted as a superfood for its reported detoxifying uses, means we'll be seeing black pizza crusts, lemonade, ice cream and more. Oh, and with more states legalizing recreational marijuana, they foresee a blossoming of cannabis cuisine via a variety of beverages, treats and snacks.

Finally, Baum + Whiteman, restaurant/food consultants in Brooklyn, agree that we'll all be drawing kitchen inspiration from the Philippines. But they also believe we'll be knee-deep in fast-casual Indian street food (chicken masala pizza, tandoori chicken poutine) and upscale Korean restaurants. Single-item restaurants (Chicago's XO Marshalltown Cafe, for example) will be grabbing, and going cashless will appeal to a greater number of restaurateurs.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe



MARGARET BROWN/Special to The Washington Post

The view as the writers made their way north through hilly Shropshire, England, toward the village of Clun. It was late afternoon, and they were tired but still had more than an hour to go to a friend's house north of Clun in the enchantingly named town of Bishop's Castle.

Often wet and challenging, cycle route offers plenty of charm along the way

By MICHAEL BROWN
AND MARGARET BROWN
Special to The Washington Post

Our three-week British bike trip last spring could be called a series of literal highs and lows. We cycled what's called the End to End: from Land's End on the southwestern tip of Cornwall in England to John O'Groats in the northeastern corner of Scotland, the two most distant inhabited points in mainland Britain.

It's roughly 1,000 miles, but the End to End is more of a concept than a route. There's no officially prescribed course; you are free to cycle it however you wish, including north to south. For that matter, you don't even need a bicycle. People walk the End to End, even run it; some have employed such imaginative modes as skateboard, motorized wheelchair and horse.

We were not so imaginative; it was simply bicycles for us. The two of us have done a good bit of cycle touring, including a trip years ago across the United States. But like probably most Americans, we had never heard of the End to End until one day early last year, when Margaret came across a British cycling guidebook on the journey.

We followed a 983-mile itinerary that quickly confirmed something about which we had been sufficiently warned but had insufficiently appreciated:

Britain ain't flat.

A grade-warning sign on a hill in southern England read a horrendous 20 percent; luckily, we were going down that one, but we caught several 16-percenters on the upside.

Nor is Britain dry. Of our 21 days on the road, most were at least partially rainy, from heavy drizzle to buckets. And traffic? Turns out there are lots of cars and trucks on that island.

In short, the trip was physically exhausting and at times emotionally draining. Ever see a couple of septuagenarians trying to negotiate a four-lane roundabout in the middle of the Liverpool-Manchester megalopolis at rush hour? Not a pretty sight, trust us. All of which is to say there was nary a thought in those three weeks about anything back home. All functions, cognitive and otherwise, were directed at survival.

But while the End to End is a challenging adventure, it's one accessible to people of all ages who have a fair amount of physical stamina—at least enough to walk a bike up the steepest hills, which we admit to doing a few times. And the rewards are many.

In England, we pedaled through dazzling green, sheep-dotted pastureland and idyllic villages. From the picturesque community of Slaidburn in the Ribbles Valley district of Lancashire, we climbed seven miles up through open moorland on a



The writers' 20-inch foldable bicycles await while they stop for midmorning coffee and a roll in the Scottish Highlands town of Fort William, a tourist center on Loch Linnhe surrounded by mountains.

single-track road no wider than a driveway. Lambs and their moms grazed peacefully alongside us as we moved slowly by, and at the top we had spectacular views of the valley below.

There were intriguing old market towns, such as Glastonbury and Shrewsbury, as well as large commercial centers that tested our navigational skills, which proved up to the demands of busy Bristol but sorely lacking in the never-ending urban strip around Warrington.

In Scotland, the mountains, lakes and wide-open expanses of the Highlands reminded

us of the American West. The landscape is spectacular—and popular, judging by the amount of traffic on the area's relatively few highways.

At breakfast at the Loch Ness Guest House in Fort Augustus, we weighed our choices for the 33-mile stretch north to Inverness. Stay on flat, but busy, A82 along the west side of Loch Ness? Or take a back road on the east side that's scenic but starts off with a five-mile, 1,000-foot climb?

We opted for the latter and were both glad we did. The east side was indeed tough initially,

but once we reached the top, the almost car-free ride through the countryside above Loch Ness was one of the trip's highlights, capped by an exhilarating descent to the shoreside hamlet of Dores. As we often did, we had packed a picnic lunch and consumed it on the Dores beach, looking out at Loch Ness in the fast-disappearing sunshine. We were past Inverness before the day's rain started.

There were, of course, scores of cathedrals, castles and monuments to explore along the way—if time and energy allowed, which unfortunately they did not for us. We had booked each night's lodging before leaving home, so we had a set schedule and limited leg power to meet it. Our one honest-to-goodness sightseeing stop was Tintern Abbey in Wales, and that was unplanned. We were meandering along a lovely rolling road by the River Wye when we descended a hill; at the bottom, out popped the looming gray ruins of the famous 13th-century structure. It was a magical sight, impossible to pass by.

Our paltry sightseeing record seemed to horrify an English friend we visited in Shropshire. "What, no other National Trust sites?" she said. This trip's about the journey, we replied, a bit defensively; next time, the sites. Still, we picked up some historical tidbits through osmosis.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

FROM PAGE 30

For example, on an evening walk through the Welsh city of Monmouth, where we were staying that night, we came across a bigger-than-life statue of Charles Rolls, co-founder of the Rolls-Royce automobile company and, we learned, part of a prominent Monmouth family.

Cyclists do the End to End in all kinds of ways: solo and in groups, small and large. Deloitte's annual charity Ride Across Britain draws hundreds of them. Some riders carry everything on their bikes, as we did. Others have a spouse, friend or commercial outfit transport their luggage — and the riders themselves, if needed. The truly hearty finish in nine to 10 days; mere mortals take 14 and up.

The two of us, ages 72 and 74 at the time, were very much in the latter category. We averaged about 50 miles a day over the three weeks, though our daily stats — dependent largely on the availability of overnight accommodations — varied widely (from 33 to 70 miles). While we stayed at bed-and-breakfasts and small inns reserved in advance, it's no doubt possible to find rooms along the way, and that would have given us more flexibility. But searching out a bed at the end of a long day would have been time-consuming and chancy; the Lake District town of Keswick, for example, was booked solid on the weekend night we were there.

Our accommodations varied in cost and comforts. The night before we started, we stayed in a cozy seaside hotel, Old Success Inn, which turned out to be one of our favorites. It was named for a fishing boat that once plied the local Cornish waters, but we hoped the name was also an omen for our upcoming trip.

In the Scottish town of Crawford, we stayed in the modest home of John and Helen Damer. There is a no-frills B&B, but the Damers are a warm couple and made us feel like part of the family instead of paying guests.

At the other end of the creature-comfort spectrum was the luxurious May House on a bluff overlooking the Atlantic near John O'Groats, with bedroom views of the Orkney Islands and the Castle of Mey, which once was the summer home of the late Queen Mother. Foodwise, one of our most rewarding overnight stops was Ben More Lodge in Crianlarich, Scotland. There, we were introduced to cullen skink, a traditional Scottish haddock soup, which we ordered every chance we got thereafter.

The biggest End to End payoff is the tremendous sense of accomplishment at the finish. For us, it was not so much self-congratulatory as "I can't believe we made it." In whatever fashion, it's definitely a moment to savor.

After posing for the obligatory photo in front of the John O'Groats signpost, we retreated to a nearby cafe and watched a group of eight End to Enders complete their ride in fine style with a bottle of bubbly and a banner reading "Congratulations" held high by a welcoming chorus of relatives and friends. Our public celebration was more low-key, but our internal burralls were no less boisterous.

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WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Pacific

Japanese arcade is game for grime

Warehouse in Kawasaki goes out of its way to replicate Walled City-style grit

By LEON COOK
Stars and Stripes

A lot of effort went into making Anata No Warehouse — or Your Warehouse, in Japanese — look like a place nobody cares about.

This five-story video-game arcade just south of Tokyo in Kawasaki was designed to represent the gritty, disreputable atmosphere of Kowloon's Walled City. It was a lawless part of Hong Kong that, before it was torn down in 1993, had the highest population density in the world and was controlled by organized crime.

While the buildings around it are clean and modern-looking, Anata No Warehouse looks run-down and dirty. At the street entrance, exposed pipework surrounds a double door marked by an English sign simply stating: "Kawasaki Warehouse." Another sign warns that nobody younger than 18 will be admitted.

The doors open automatically and lead to a rusty, red-lit antechamber. A security camera watched mutely as I approached another metal door, which opened with a pneumatic hiss. Inside there's a dimly lit alley with grimy walls. Hidden speakers played the symphony of commerce as I walked past neon-lit false storefronts to the escalator that leads to the arcade proper. Visitors walk through a residential section with several levels of shipping-container houses. It was quite a sight. I felt like spending hours exploring all the details; however, the games were calling.

The arcade is extensive, and row after row of machines offer plenty of choices. There are fighting games, rhythm games, dancing games, racing games, shooting games and retro games. Some of the machines are artificial, aged and coated with the same faux grime that gives the building its run-down charm.

A section of claw machines is the brightest-lit area of the arcade, contrasting with the dimly lit aesthetic. There are some good prizes to win, such as giant plush toys, figurines from Japanese cartoons and even boxes of ice cream.

The third floor is dedicated to



PHOTOS BY LEON COOK/Stars and Stripes

Anata No Warehouse in Kawasaki, Japan, appears to be grimy, including some of the arcade machines.



A red-lit, narrow alley lends an almost dystopian feel to the entryway of the arcade.

pachinko and video gambling machines; however, an unfriendly sign in Japanese discourages entry to those who won't be playing. I gave it a glance and continued to the fourth floor, which is devoted to billiards, darts and ping pong.

The fifth and final level can be reached only by elevator and

contains an internet cafe and games room, where you can play mahjong. You can also buy an odd assortment of snacks here, ranging from Western favorites like spaghetti and chicken tenders to traditional Japanese fare, such as curry rice and donburi, a rice dish served in a bowl. Nothing was more expensive than \$80



There's a stark contrast between the rundown appearance of Anata No Warehouse compared with its neighboring buildings.

yen (about \$5.30).

The aesthetics at Anata No Warehouse are breathtaking and even extend to the men's bathroom, which looks like something you'd encounter in "Silent Hill." Using it made me feel like I needed a full-body chemical wash in addition to washing my hands.

Even without the decorations, Anata No Warehouse would still be a great arcade, and if you're nostalgic for a time when American kids pumped quarters into games at the mall, you won't be disappointed by what Japan has to offer.

cook.leon@stripes.com
Twitter: @LeonCook12

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

Anata No Warehouse is a 10-minute walk from Kawasaki Station.

TIMES

9 a.m. to 11:45 p.m. weekdays;
7 a.m. to 11:45 p.m., weekends

COSTS

Admission is free. Most arcade machines cost 100 yen, though some are free and others cost more.

FOOD

The top-floor internet cafe offers snacks, such as chicken tenders, sandwiches and donburi. Ample dining options are available near Kawasaki Station.

INFORMATION

04-4246-2360; warehouse.net.jp
(in Japanese)

— Leon Cook



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WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Pacific

A plate of hot dry noodles, a breakfast dish from Hubei province made entirely with sesame oil, at the opening stop on Lost Plate's Beijing Evening Tour.



Purple spring pancakes dyed with vegetable coloring are served on the tour. To maintain appeal, Lost Plate's restaurants must be local, and diners are asked to keep itineraries to themselves.

Chinese tour for foodies

Company gives tourists a more authentic culinary experience

By ANNA HARTLEY

Special to The Washington Post

My first visit to mainland China is a short one of just seven days, and I want to be able to come away feeling like I've tasted some real Chinese food, the stuff the locals eat. Enter Lost Plate, a small tour company that dives straight into the dense alley neighborhoods (hutongs) of the old city and visits hole-in-the-wall restaurants that visitors generally can't find. "Would you like a beer?" our guide Ernestina asks, offering me a can of Yanjing beer in a custom koozie. It's only about 43 degrees out, but I accept happily. My fiancé and I have just emerged from one of the many exits of the Yonghegong metro station in the northeast of the city, where Ernestina easily spotted us among the waves of locals.

Night has fallen by the time our tour group assembles. We walk away from the unlit sloping roofs of the Tibetan Buddhist Lama Temple, where two red, motorized tuk-tuks and their drivers are waiting for us. My fiancé and I slide onto a tiny bench seat, face to face with a couple from California. We all wriggle down under the thick blanket as the tuk-tuk lurches to life and we zoom toward the first restaurant of the night.

Six sets of chopsticks hover over six steaming dishes. "Mix it well until the noodles are coated," Ernestina instructs. My plate becomes a blur as I mix the hot dried noodles, a breakfast dish from Hubei province brought to us by a woman whose head barely clears the counter between our low, wooden table and the tiny kitchen behind her. The noodles are delicious and made entirely with sesame oil, which gives it a rich, smooth texture that a cheaper mix of peanut and sesame oils not provide.

We've been told to expect plenty of regional dishes like this tonight, but Ernestina made a point of mentioning that there would be no rice — because most Westerners associate Chinese food so strongly with it. His-



PHOTOS BY ANNA HARTLEY/Special to The Washington Post

Food sizzles on the hot plate at a stop advertising Mongolian barbecue. The culinary style has little to do with Mongolian cuisine, but it has been embraced by the Chinese.

torically, Beijingers have never eaten much rice. The dishes we sampled were mostly wheat-based, such as noodles, pancakes and dumplings.

"We'll leave in two minutes!" Ernestina says, looking at her watch. Our chef waves goodbye as we hustle back outside into the cold air, and a new customer slides into one of the restaurant's few seats.

The tuk-tuk train moves on. We chat and laugh as we zigzag through the mostly unlit alleyways that make up the hutongs. The streets are lined with old shade trees and are surprisingly quiet little patches of ordinary community life in the center of the vast city. The few cars we see are covered with protective sheets and a thick layer of autumn leaves, and people carefully weave quiet electric scooters between bicycles. As we zip down yet another narrow alleyway, we pass so close to the people walking by that I could reach out and touch their coats. Sticking to these dense alleys is key to the success of Lost Plate

tours. When the founder of the company, Ruixi Hu, moved to the capital from Chengdu, she discovered that finding good food was hard. The Internet didn't give her the answers she was looking for. Over time, she was able to ferret out the culinary gems that she knew were hiding just around the corner, known to locals but invisible to outsiders.

Armed with these valuable addresses, Ruixi and her American husband, Brian Bergey, founded Lost Plate in 2014 and have now expanded to four cities, having added Shanghai, Chengdu and Xian.

Restaurant Two announces itself with a small chalkboard hanging from a tree, which I'm told says "Mongolian barbecue." At the back of the room, a group of young men grows rowdy, raising toast with small glasses of clear liquor. Plates with slices of eggplant, onion, bell pepper, lamb and pork belly are arranged next to the huge hot plate in the center of our table.

Legend plays a large role in any food culture, and China's is

no exception. As our hot plate heats up, Ernestina explains the story of a long-gone Mongolian soldier who was fed up with army slop and began to cook his own meals using his metal helmet as a hot plate — the first Mongolian barbecue.

In reality, other than the lamb we're trying, Mongolian barbecue has little to do with Mongolian cuisine, but it has undoubtedly been embraced by the Chinese. The first Mongolian barbecue restaurants, as we know them today, were opened in Taipei in the early 1950s before spreading back over to the mainland.

A large exhaust fan hangs down from the ceiling, obscuring my view of Gene, who is helping Ernestina distribute the vegetables and meat on the grilling surface. We pluck fried pieces of meat and vegetables from the hot plate, then coat them in a mixture of delicious spices and bread crumbs before popping them into our mouths. The black hot plate is scarcely empty when we are given the move-on notice. More

food awaits in another pocket of the city.

The deep-fried meat buns we have at Restaurant Three are as large as a man's fist. My pie has a thick, crunchy outer shell of fried dough filled with tender, slow-cooked beef, scallions and the restaurant's secret mix of spices. Many recipes also call for pork, but this restaurant is halal. It is also apparently one of two left in the capital that make the buns in the labor-intensive traditional style.

This restaurant is loud and busy, but our table becomes momentarily quiet as we are lost in appreciation of our buns. Ernestina passes around small glasses of baijiu, a clear and very strong liquor made, in this case, from sorghum, that warms our bellies even further.

Even if I knew where I was at this point, I wouldn't tell you. For the Lost Plate tours to work, the restaurants have to stay local, and we have been asked to keep tonight's itinerary to ourselves.

As a former tour guide and current tourist, I appreciate this approach, but it is probably unnecessary. Although the Chinese visit the rest of the world in enormous numbers, the reverse doesn't appear to be true. It might just be a particularly quiet period, but we saw only a few dozen other Westerners during our weeklong stay. In any case, the rest of the night is spent tonight are happy to have our business, but as far as I can see, not dependent on it.

After the dumplings, we have delicate spring pancakes in a family restaurant that is quiet after the dinner rush.

Dessert is a surprisingly delicious cup of sour fermented milk and sweet red beans at another small establishment, whose walls are papered with handwritten thank-you notes, like thousands of colorful sales. We finish with pints of beer at a trendy, dimly lit, Chinese-owned brewery.

By the end of the night, as Ernestina herds us through the winding unlit alleys to the closest metro station, we're all in high spirits. We've covered a lot of ground — geographically and culturally — and eaten very well indeed.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Pacific

Japan off the grid

Try some lesser-known locations to avoid the crowds during tourism boom

By NIKKI EKSTEIN

Bloomberg

Japan is in the middle of a travel boom. Political instability across much of the world has given it the appeal of a safe haven, and before the 2020 Olympics, the country has been rolling out the red carpet for visitors.

Among the new perks are two luxury sleeper trains: the Twilight Express Mizukaze, which offers a circular tour around the Sanyo and Sanin areas of western Japan, and the Train Suite Shiki-shima, connecting formerly extreme corners of the countryside. There's also the just-formed Ryokan Collection, a consortium of high-end inns that aims to improve access for non-Japanese-speaking travelers outside of the major cities.

Travel to Japan showed double-digit growth in 2017 from 2016, so you'll want to take advantage of this development and escape the crowds by hitting the stunning countryside. Here are places to discover before everyone else does.

Kurashiki

It's only 45 minutes from Osaka on the bullet train, but Kurashiki feels worlds away. The historic city center of Bikan, a 10-minute walk from the station, is a time warp to the Edo era, when its namesake river formed an important cornerstone of Japanese mercantile trails; the area is still car-free.

Along the riverbanks, willow-flanked white-and-gray houses are just as they were in the 1600s—but instead of acting as rice stores and granaries, they've been reborn as cafes, pottery workshops and Japanese denim boutiques.

Kurashiki is also the town credited as the birthplace of sake. Base yourself at the newly expanded Ryokan Kurashiki, with seven tatami-style rooms in a former sugar warehouse. Then explore sake shops for a day before a trip to the contemporary art paradise of Naoshima Island and the Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum in Takamatsu, where more than 150 of the famous sculptor's stone works are still preserved. Both are roughly an hour's drive away.

If your favorite word at sushi restaurants is uni, try Ise Shima. It's set at the tip of Mie prefecture—for home southeast of Kyoto by shinkansen—and is known for its amas, or fisherwomen, who free-dive for sea urchin, abalone and oysters. Sample their daily catch at any of the oyster stands along Ago Bay (it's best to go with a guide, who will negotiate \$25 all-you-can-eat deals) or at Kagetsu, a more formal spot that makes tasting



PHOTOS BY NORINO HAYASHI/Bloomberg

Machiyo Yamashita, a female sea-diver, gathers seaweed onto the shore in Shima, Mie prefecture, Japan.

KNOW & GO

Booking an off-the-grid trip to Japan isn't especially do-it-yourself friendly. You're better off working with local experts who can secure insider access at famously closed-off artisan studios or exploring temples with guides who can explain their full significance.

If you're looking for culture, Catherine Heald of Remote Lands has an unrivaled proficiency in Japan's most hidden corners. Each trip is bespoke, and all feature top-notch guides. For a more active vacation, whether you want a sense of adventure or more hands-on experiences, try Black Tomato, whose co-founder Tom Marchant has a personal passion for Japan.

For insider access, Japan Curator has an impressive Rolodex with the country's elite, facilitating everything from brown bear safaris in Hokkaido to private dinners with the cast of a live-action manga movie.

meals out of lobster-infused miso soup and abalone sauteed in a foie gras—like abalone liver sauce.

An alternate plan is a noon-time visit to go pearl shopping at Mikimoto, which maintains its headquarters and a small museum in Ise Shima. Stay at the waterfront Hiramatsu Hotel & Resorts Kashikojima, one of four new hotels run by Japanese star chef Hiroyuki Hiramatsu. And don't miss a visit to the Ise Grand Shrine, one of the country's biggest and most important monuments, which gets completely rebuilt every 20 years.

Yakushima

Cherry blossoms get all the attention, but Japan is full of natural wonder, much of it little

known. Take Yakushima. This tiny island in Japan's far south has UNESCO protection for its towering cedar forests, all draped in thick carpets of brilliant green moss. Dreamlike hiking trails are dotted with suspension bridges, river views and ancient trees—including one sacred cedar that's considered to be 7,200 years old.

On the coast, you'll find mangrove-dense beaches that are havens for loggerhead turtles; inland, you might spot unique local breeds of deer and monkeys. And in between are shops of woodworkers who give new life to fallen trees.

Stay at the sustainability minded Sankara Hotel & Spa, with 12 luxury cottages scattered throughout the forest; the



Kurashiki's city center of Bikan is a time warp to the Edo era.

innkeepers can point you toward rhododendron-heavy gardens, the island's best natural hot springs or firefly-filled clearings with views of the Milky Way.

Shikoku

The smallest of Japan's four major islands, Shikoku is best known for its 88-temple pilgrimage route. It's a place to take in Japan's remarkable architectural heritage, from the Iya-no-Kazurabashi Bridge, which was built entirely out of thick vines by samurai 800 years ago, to the remote village houses in Iya Valley, which are now being restored by Japanophile author Alex Kerr as part of the Chiiori Trust initiative. You can even rent them out as vacation homes. Focus on the most beauti-

ful sections of the temple trail—like the five-storied pagoda at temple 31—and save time to visit the country's oldest Kabuki theater, Old Kōnpira. The Edo era homes in the town of Mima are also worth a visit: Many are now shops, selling traditionally made kimonos and wooden sandals.

Then get the ultimate contrast by visiting one of the most modern monuments in the country: the minimalist Komyo-ji Buddhist temple, where the walls of latticed joinery are the work of Pritzker Prize winner Tadao Ando. The architect has also designed a seven-room hotel in the area called Setouchi Anagiri; its concrete-framed lap pool juts out over the countryside for dramatic sunset views.

WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

Tastes like home

US athletes will find familiar flavors at Winter Games in South Korea

By Sally Ho
Associated Press

SPAM, trout, fried chicken, moon pies and anything slathered in mayonnaise — those are some of the flavors of South Korea's home cooking that might seem a bit familiar to the U.S. athletes and hordes of westerners who will descend upon the small Asian country for the 2018 Olympic Winter Games.

But within those bites is a story of South Korea's resilience, rising from a poverty-stricken country torn apart by the Korean War to a world power set to host the glittering Olympics for the second time, all in a matter of just a few generations.

"They would recognize things that were of great use and they would take them and adapted it with what they wanted out of it," said Michael Pettit, a Korea history expert and author. "The things that came to them, they have another existence in Korea. It just didn't stay the same."

When the world's most elite athletes move into the 21st-century Olympic village, there will still be echoes of the war that tore apart that land decades ago.

Though Western influence on the South Korean diet dates back more than a century thanks to missionaries, diplomats and world explorers who left an imprint on the cuisine, it was the massive GI influence since the 1950s that brought a wave of new ingredients and tastes at a time when hunger was a serious problem in the country.

Alves Key, secretary of the Korean War Veterans Association, said more than 5.7 million military members were officially involved in the three-year war, but more than 2 million others have since served in the country through the following rebuild-ing years.

Here are some of the most popular Korean foods with an American influence:

Army stew

A South Korean dish called Budae Jjigae, or "army stew," prominently features SPAM, the canned meat product from Minnesota. The stew is a salty, savory concoction of spicy kimchi, ramen noodles and various processed meat products served bubbling hot. SPAM

— which has a somewhat mixed reputation back home in parts of the U.S. — has been loved by South Koreans as a symbol of American prosperity and a source of always-ready protein since it appeared with the U.S. military and was given to starving children or sold on the black market as a prestigious food item. The dish in some cases is also affectionately known as "army base stew" or even "army garbage stew," as some suggests the poor got them as scraps.

Meanwhile, some food interchanges reflect the makeup of the GIs themselves.

Fried chicken

Southern foods such as fried chicken and moon pies have made lasting impressions on the Korean diet, just as the U.S. military has historically included a large percentage of its recruits from the Southern U.S. The taste of flour-battered chicken and using deep-frying as a cooking technique are both hallmarks of Southern cuisine. And long before KFC made its way to Seoul, the crispy, buttery



PHOTOS BY ELAINE THOMPSON/AP

Restaurant owner A.J. Han chops fresh chicken at her Korean-style fried chicken shop, Stars in the Sky, in Edmonds, Wash. Below, from left: Deep-fried chicken; a menu showing SPAM and other meats; and simmering "army stew," which prominently features SPAM. American GIs brought the canned meat product to South Korea, where locals quickly fell in love with it.



chicken pieces were simply called "Kentucky chicken" in South Korea, according to Clark Sorensen, Korea history professor and the director of the University of Washington's Center for Korea Studies.

A.J. Han, who grew up in South Korea, said her relatives remember falling in love with fried chicken at first taste. The 34-year-old restaurant owner and chef said her family then developed their own recipe that she still uses at Stars in the Sky, a popular Korean-style fried chicken shop outside of Seattle.

"Because of the Kentucky fried chicken came over, that's why people started doing battering," Han said.

The moon pie

Moon pies — a treat made of chocolate, graham crackers and marshmallows — are also similar to the popular Choco Pie in South Korea. The native snack food has such a cult following that it's been rumored to be something of a sought-after contraband and bribery tool in North Korea, according to Pettit.

"The fact that it's the Southern style

(food) also reflects the demographics of the Army style," Pettit said.

Mayonnaise

Even when South Koreans are influenced by a product, historians point to how the prideful country has made it its own. While mayo is commonly used in cold salads and sandwiches in the U.S., Koreans have enjoyed it as a ubiquitous sauce, dip and general flavor enhancer. It's also often used in the banchans, or side dishes, that accompany every meal, mixed with everything from potatoes, cabbage and corn to seaweed.

"You always get these vegetables covered in mayonnaise but that's not actually western. They've adapted, indigenized that, just like American pizza is not like Italian pizza," Sorensen said. "The flavors aren't exactly western flavors."

Trout fishing

Of all the food examples that illustrate the enduring U.S.-South Korean alliance, one little talked about story has become

lore. And it involves trout swimming in the waters around Pyeongchang, where the Olympics will be held.

Many years ago, as the story famously goes, an American officer who was an avid fisherman helped convince local and military authorities to import a species of live trout from the U.S. into the mountain streams near Pyeongchang, where there were other kinds of native trout.

Locals viewed that as a win-win situation, as the officer presumably got his fishing in and the natives had another source of protein. Pettit said he's heard the story, but hasn't found it substantiated in any historical or official text, though it could be one of the many things that happened during the massive era of transformation that the governments quietly allowed or facilitated.

Pyeongchang today still hosts an annual trout festival.

"He must have gone through a considerable amount of trouble and he must have had Korean collaborators, too," Sorensen said of the officer. "Koreans like fish."

WEEKEND: MOVIES



In "Winchester," Helen Mirren plays Sarah Winchester, the reclusive heiress who spent years — and millions — adding rooms to her mansion in San Jose, Calif. Lionsgate-CBS Films

A welcome role

Helen Mirren embraces anti-gun vibe of supernatural thriller 'Winchester'

By JEN YAMATO
Los Angeles Times

On a bright Los Angeles morning a few days after the Golden Globes, Helen Mirren — dressed impeccably in black while discussing her latest film, the haunted-house tale "Winchester" — arrived at an unexpected concern: the fate of all those poor Stormtroopers in the "Star Wars" movies. "I saw 'The Force Awakens' and I thought they made a terrible mistake because they took the Stormtrooper's hat off," the Oscar-winning star of "The Queen" and British national treasure said, feigning shock.

"There was this lovely young actor (John Boyega) — which means one of the Stormtroopers is a human being. And if he's a human, they're all human. And you have been indiscriminately killing Stormtroopers for the last (six) 'Star Wars' movies without any consideration to their humanity!"

Themes of violence, death and how those in the world of the living come to terms with their role in it all run throughout the otherwise titillating frights of "Winchester," a supernatural horror film based on the real widowed heir to the Winchester rifle fortune. Opening this weekend, the film was directed by Peter Spierig and Michael Spierig, whose cult-favorite genre work includes "Daybreakers" and "Predestination."

A cult figure of her own among haunted-house enthusiasts, Sarah Winchester spent 38 years and millions of dollars building her famously bizarre Victorian mansion in San Jose, Calif., at the turn of the 20th century. Urban legend says she was guided in her blueprints by spirits who spoke to her from the beyond.

As Winchester, who lost her husband and young child at an early age, Mirren spends the film in black widow's lace.

It's an intriguing turn for a grand dame of stage and screen — and also perfectly fitting given the ways Mirren has sought to defy expectations over a five-decade career.

Few moviegoers would expect to see Helen Mirren possessed by malevolent ghosts in a mainstream PG-13 horror movie. Costar Jason Clarke, who plays a (fictional) doctor hired by the Winchester board to declare Sarah Winchester unfit to hold her shares in the company, certainly didn't.

"But," he said, "I was happy to be there to see it. There's this sense of exploration and play in how she plays a scene and a character and the choices that she makes. There's nothing scared about Helen Mirren, and you see that in the way she goes about her life."

In one action-packed scene in which their characters face off against dark forces inside Winchester's sprawling, forbidding home, the actors agreed to go for it and play it big.

"We were both nervous about whether it was too over the top, but then she grabbed me by the arm and said, 'I didn't play Phedra three times for nothing, dear.'"

"She is Helen Mirren. She was Cleopatra. She was Phedra. And that was how she characterized it," Clarke said with a laugh. "We were in a ghost story acting big and pretending to hear spirits and voices and she just goes — 'We're doing Shakespeare.' Right on, Helen."

That confidence wasn't always so rock-solid, Mirren revealed.

In her 20s, she visited a psychic in the hopes of learning about her future. He instructed her to write down everything he said as he read her palm. Writing so fast the words barely registered, she walked away holding her own fortunes foretold in her hands.

"I looked at the sheaf of papers and

realized that I didn't want to know what's in my future. I want it to be an adventure and a mystery. I went up to the first rubbish bin I could find," she said with a smile, "and I threw my future away."

The one prediction she remembered him sharing was that she wouldn't find success until her later years. "Of course, when you're 22 you so don't want to hear that," she said with a grin. "But you know, he was absolutely correct."

Mirren might not believe in the supernatural, but she did find herself communing with the late Winchester while gazing upon one of the estate's most intriguing pieces.

"In the house are these two beautiful stained glass panels with quotes from Shakespeare on them," she said of the twin windows inscribed with lines from "Troilus and Cressida" and "Richard II." "Wide unclasp the tables of their thoughts' and 'These same thoughts people this little world.'"

She leaned back, marveling. "Two quotes from two different plays that fit together, but the meaning is so mysterious. I looked at that endlessly trying to think, 'What is she saying?' And I think she's talking about freedom of thought, that people should be able to think whatever they want."

As for what attracted her to a film in the horror genre — at a time before the mega-success of "Get Out" and "It" — repopularized the medium with audi-

Helen Mirren says she was drawn to her real-life character's tragic obsession and what she sees as her guilt and pain in the new supernatural film "Winchester."

ZUMA PRESS/TNS



ences — Mirren pointed to the conscience behind Winchester's tragic obsession.

"I think it is legitimate to say that there was a sensitivity to the deaths of the people who died by the Winchester gun," mused Mirren. "The world is a terrifying place, and a lot of the terror in the world comes from arms in one sort or another, and the sale of arms. And that's what I really like about the underlying story of the film — her guilt and her pain."

Mirren cited a moment where Winchester slams the most "unconscionable" part of the gun trade. "She's not talking about people who use them," Mirren said. "She's talking about the people who make and sell them. Every country is culpable in that."

The actress also considered her own culpability in the glamorization of violence.

"It's always worried me," she admitted. "In 'Red,' I played a sniper. I fired every kind of gun on the planet including a Gatling. The thing that upsets me in movies is when the baddies all just get slaughtered. I always watch going, 'He's got children! Maybe he's only there because he's got a second mortgage and his wife's got a terrible disease and he's trying to pay her medical bills!'"

Which is what brought her to the aforementioned subject of Stormtroopers and moral interrogations in the "Star Wars" galaxy.

"Who are they? Why are they there?" Mirren considered, half-joking, of the dark side's most expendable minions. "We only know that we're on the light side if we win. Everybody thinks they're the hero of their own story. But, also: History says the winner gets to write the history."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 37

WEEKEND: MOVIES

FROM PAGE 36

Earlier in January, Mirren took part in a moment in Hollywood history when, as a presenter and nominee at the 75th Golden Globes, she joined a wave of celebrities in wearing black in support of the Time's Up movement.

"It was a great year to be in that room," said Mirren, who earned her 15th Golden Globes nod for an awards-qualifying run of the upcoming release "The Leisure Seeker." "The best thing about it was that it was very positive. Often, people are criticized for using that situation as a platform for any political statement whatsoever, but that night it was like, 'This is what we're all here for.' I was proud of women, and I was proud of my industry to a certain extent."

In 1975, as a rising star on the London stage and member of the Royal Shakespeare Company, Mirren endured the sexist pandering of Brit interviewer Michael Parkinson on his talk show. When the interview resurfaced in the age of YouTube, footage of the young Mirren firing back went viral, lending her long-overdue support from a contemporary public.

This year, Mirren has been excited to see Hollywood's #MeToo and Time's Up movements force change in how the entertainment industry confronts sexual harassment and abuse—a cultural shift sparked by accusations against alleged serial abuser Harvey Weinstein, the former Miramax mogul who guided Mirren to an Oscar win for "The English Patient."

"The first time I worked with him and his brother was when they distributed a film I did called 'The Cook, the Thief, His Wife, and Her Lover,' which was an art movie and which normally would have never gotten distribution in America—but the Weinstein brothers distributed it, and a lot of filmmakers have a lot to be grateful to the Weinstein brothers for that very reason, especially in independent film. So, that's one side of it," Mirren said.

"You have this other side. It's so confusing, and so upsetting, and so annoying—especially annoying," she said. "And also utterly mysterious to me because it's clearly nothing about me. What could be less sexy than the stories one has been reading in the papers?—and obviously completely to do with power."

"(Weinstein's alleged abuses were) something I would have bet a lot of money wouldn't happen to. I thought we'd gone way beyond that. I would have believed it 30 years ago. I thought 'no, no way—we're way beyond that.'"

She says she hopes that Time's Up becomes a global movement.

"I think people are going to, to expose the behavior, and now people begin to expose why. I think it's fantastic that it's been exposed," she said. "For me it's about time, but it comes to the same thing—time's up."

"Winchester" was not screened for critics. The supernatural horror film, starring Helen Mirren and Jason Clarke, is rated PG-13 for violence, disturbing images, drug content, some sexual material and drug elements. Running time: 99 minutes.



Possessed real estate

What makes a movie seriously frightening? It's hard to say, but these haunted-house films manage to accomplish it.

BY JOHN ANDERSON
Newsday

When shopping for a haunted house, what do we look for? Charm? Elegance? State-of-the-art appliances? No. According to the trailer for the new supernatural horror film "Winchester," what we want are "Spirits! Souls! Demons! Ghosts! Entities! Apparitions! Shadows! Beings! Devils! Poltergeists! Wraiths! Spectres!" The movie was "inspired" by a real-life, wildly eccentric structure—the Winchester Mystery House, now a tourist attraction in San Jose, Calif. It's long said to be haunted, though not every reputedly haunted house is. Nor is every horror movie with a house necessarily a haunted-house movie. "Psycho" (1960), for instance, features the creepiest Victorian in cinema, but it isn't haunted except by Norman Bates' psychoses. The animated "Spirited Away" (2001) boasted a structure full of phantasms, but can a bathhouse be haunted? "Beetlejuice" (1988) was inhabited by ghosts (Geena Davis and Alec Baldwin), but it's too funny to be a real horror movie. And as scary as it is, "Insidious" (2010) wasn't really about the house, but rather personal demonic possession. Also, a lot of horror movies rely too much on jokes, jump scares and a lack a seriousness about being seriously frightening.

The following 15 films all feature a haunted house as one of its primary locations and are ranked in order of scare value—all originals; no sequels (with one exception) or remakes.

1. **"The Shining" (1980)** OK, technically, it's a hotel (not even technically—it's definitely a hotel). Still, the place Stanley Kubrick has created in his masterful adaptation of the Stephen King novel is one of the many things that place it among the most unnerving works of horror, and one of the most complex, layered, cinematic and analyzed movies in any category.

2. **"The Conjuring" (2013)** I hadn't been this scared by a movie since I was 9 and watched "The Haunting"; one scene was literally spine-tingling, right up to the base of my skull. In it (the movie, not the skull), Patrick Wilson and Vera Farmiga

play Ed and Lorraine Warren, the real-life paranormal investigators whose work inspired the "Amityville Horror" franchise and who rescue a family stuck in a house that's out to get them.

3. **"The Haunting" (1963)** The fabled Robert Wise, who directed "West Side Story" and "The Sound of Music," is also responsible for one of the most unnerving psychothrillers in the canon, one committed to the idea that what you don't know—and can't see—will definitely crawl out of the woodwork and kill you. Based on Shirley Jackson's "The Haunting of Hill House," it stars Julie Harris and Claire Bloom as survivors of psychic phenomena who are brought by a paranormal researcher (Richard Johnson) into a mansion of malevolent intent.

4. **"The Others" (2001)** Spain's Alejandro Amenabar certainly produced this century's first great horror film, and it remains among the best, with atmospherics that are unnerving, acting that's first-rate and an ending that's a virtual heart attack. Nicole Kidman plays Grace, who, while waiting for word of her missing husband during World War II, moves her two photosensitive children to a darkened house on the English Coast. There, she starts to think the servants are playing tricks on her.

5. **"The Orphanage" (2007)** Ornatel plotted and utterly terrifying, this Spanish-language chiller was produced by Guillermo del Toro ("The Shape of Water") and directed by J.A. Bayona. It is about an adoptee who returns to the house that was her childhood orphanage with plans to turn it into a home for disabled children. Then her son disappears.

6. **"The Innocents" (1961)** In director Jack Clayton's chiller, a viewer is never quite sure who's evil, or crazy. Based on Henry James' "The Turn of the Screw," it stars Deborah Kerr as a newly hired nanny who becomes convinced her employer's abode is haunted. She isn't quite sure of her children, either.

7. **"Poltergeist" (1982)** A smorgasbord of shock, fright and iconic dialogue ("They're here"), this creeper from director Tobe Hooper ("Texas Chainsaw Massacre") and writer-producer Steven Spielberg was a seriously scary movie, one adorned with maggots in the meat, melting faces and imperiled children. It doesn't soothe one's nerves now

to know the movie has this "curse" hanging about it (actresses Dominique Dunne and Heather O'Rourke both died very young and under extraordinary circumstances), but even when it was new it was a winner.

8. **"The Amityville Horror" (1979)** Couldn't leave this one out. Starring James Brolin and Margot Kidder as the couple who move into the site of a mass murder in Amityville, this was an Oscar-nominated movie (for Lalo Schiffrin's score) that spawned a mini-movie industry.

9. **"The Uninvited" (1944)** Stylish, droll and a good deal less dreadful than most haunted-house stories, it stars Ray Milland and Ruth Hussey as a brother and sister who buy a Gothic mansion on the Cornwall coast, and only then discover why the place came so cheap.

10. **"Crimson Peak" (2015)** There's a bit of both "Jane Eyre" and "Rebecca" in this del Toro-directed chiller, in which young Edith (Mia Wasikowska) marries Sir Thomas Sharpe (Tom Hiddleston) and is swept away to his remote English mansion, where Thomas' sister, Lady Lucille (Jessica Chastain), protects the family's dark secrets.

11. **"House on Haunted Hill" (1959)** Vincent Price was in his ghoulish prime as an eccentric millionaire who offers \$10,000 to whichever of his five guests can stay the whole night at his haunted mansion (it's always a mansion, never a ranch). It was directed by William Castle, master of the primitive special effects who introduced "Emergo" during the film's theatrical run: At the appropriate moment, a "skeleton" would fly over the heads of the audience.

12. **"The Legend of Hell House" (1973)** Mediums venture into a house once inhabited by a 6-foot-5 serial killer.

13. **"Ju-On: The Grudge" (2002)** The best of Japanese director Takashi Shimizu's six films about the murderous Saeki ghosts and their terrifying house.

14. **"The Changeling" (1980)** George C. Scott as a music professor living with the ghost of a young child.

15. **"Sinister" (2012)** Shot on Long Island, it concerns a true-crime writer (Ethan Hawke) who moves his family into a house where he finds a box of home movies depicting grisly murders in the attic. Highly underrated fiendishness.

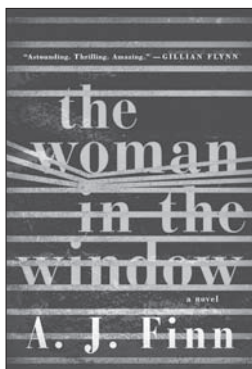
WEEKEND: BOOKS

Thriller reviews

New, must-read titles heavy on scandal, secrets and suspense

By BETHANNE PATRICK ■ Special to The Washington Post

“**G**one Girl” is gone, devoured by your book group ages ago. The same goes for “The Girl on the Train,” “The Widow” and “Big Little Lies” — all titles you loved. Or hated. Or at least argued about before diving further into the pinot grigio and pondering your next choice. But what book to pick now? This year is already turning out to be a terrific one for thrillers and twisty tales of domestic suspense and deceit. To help sort them out, here’s a handy guide for selecting the best one for your group — or just for yourself. And the right drink to go with it.



The Woman in the Window

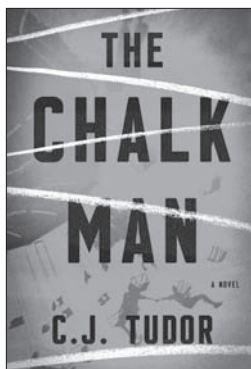
A.J. Finn

What it's about: A Brooklyn agoraphobe named Anna Fox spots a new family across the way, but as she gets to know them, she finds out they aren't at all what they seem to be, or even who they seem to be. Is it her expertise as a therapist talking, or the large amounts of red wine she consumes? To find out, Anna may have to leave the house.

For your group if: You loved “The Girl on the Train” and want a classic whodunit.

Not for your group if: Alcoholism upsets you.

Typical protagonist tippie: Five glasses of merlot.



The Chalk Man

C.J. Tudor

What it's about: As children, Eddie and his friends would send each other messages through a secret code of chalk-drawn men. One of those chalk men wound up leading them to a dismembered body. Thirty years later, someone has sent the adult Eddie a note with a chalk-man drawing, and he realizes someone is afraid Eddie knows too much. The worst part is he doesn't, but will soon.

For your group if: Your favorite TV series is “Shetland.”

Not for your group if: You hated “The Woman in the Water.”

Typical protagonist tippie: A few pints of lager.



The Wife Between Us

Greer Hendricks and Sarah Pekkanen

What it's about: Vanessa, recently divorced from Richard, learns he is engaged again and envies the new woman, Nellie. Richard, a hedge-fund manager, may be deceiving one or both women — even others. Pekkanen and Hendricks keep the suspense dial at excruciating. If the plot's not wholly new, the storytelling definitely is.

For your group if: You're ready for a complete roller coaster ride of a novel.

Not for your group if: You dislike the atmosphere of upper-class New York City.

Typical protagonist tippie: Three glasses of chardonnay.



Need to Know

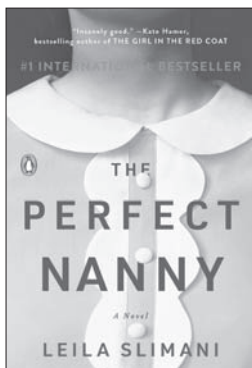
Karen Cleveland

What it's about: Vivian Miller has a sweet job on the CIA Russian desk as an analyst, although she'd really rather stay home with her family of four children and loving husband, Matt. But then Vivian discovers a terrible secret about Matt, and the job he's urged her to keep takes on new importance. Vivian finds it hard to know whom to trust as the family's seemingly idyllic life is threatened by a cascade of secrets and other threats.

For your group if: You love D.C.-centric stories, especially those with spies.

Not for your group if: You're bored by “The Americans.”

Typical protagonist tippie: Coffee.



The Perfect Nanny

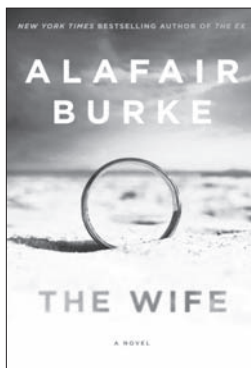
Leila Slimani

What it's about: When Myriam returns to work after having a baby, she hires a nanny named Louise who seems ideal; she's punctual, polite, almost prim. Like the book's first sentence, however, Louise's appearance is deceiving. Slimani ratchets up the tension here through close quarters, resentment and complicity. The book, which won France's prestigious Prix Goncourt, is chilling and an important look at the unseen challenges faced by service workers.

For your group if: You appreciate a European perspective on race, class and motherhood.

Not for your group if: Stories of child death upset you.

Typical protagonist tippie: A measured flute of champagne.



The Wife

Alafair Burke

What it's about: Angela's marriage to brilliant economics professor Jason is perfect. Unfortunately, as his career takes flight, women begin to hurl accusations of sexual misconduct his way. Angela tries to stand by her man, but when one of Jason's accusers, a woman named Kerry Lynch, disappears, she's forced to reconsider her loyalty.

For your group if: You like your #MeToo meme as a fast-paced narrative.

Not for your group if: You can't live with a little ambiguity at the end.

Typical protagonist tippie: Nespresso.

WEEKEND: TELEVISION & DVD

NEW ON DVD

"Last Flag Flying": Richard Linklater's "Last Flag Flying" is a marvelous tale of friendship, family, duty, respect, pain and fear that comes to life through the sterling performances by Steve Carell, Laurence Fishburne and Bryan Cranston. In 2003, former Navy Corps medic Richard "Doc" Shepherd (Carell) tracks down ex-Marines Sal (Cranston) and Mueller (Fishburne), two men with whom he served during the Vietnam War 30 years earlier. Shepherd hasn't seen the two men for decades, but enlists them in the solemn duty of helping him transport and bury his son, a young Marine killed in the Iraq War. Although both men have gone on to very different lives, they finally agree to help. Watching Cranston, Fishburne and Carell give life to Linklater's words is like getting to watch three master painters at work. Each attacks the canvas with a very different style, but what they create together is made stronger by the other. It would have been easy for Linklater to make this an anti-war film or a pro-military production. There are moments when both are discussed with a kick-to-the-gut frankness, but the big-ticket political items always give way to the very human aspects of the story. It is through this weird trip that all three men face the reality that they are carrying burdens and finally realize the load is not nearly as heavy when shared.



LIENSAGE/AP

From left: Bryan Cranston, Steve Carell and Laurence Fishburne star in "Last Flag Flying," now available on DVD.

"In Search of Fellini": The film follows Lucy, a young woman (Ksenia Solo) who has lived a sheltered life going on a journey to meet the Italian filmmaker. On her own for the first time, Lucy must learn to find herself while also searching for Fellini. Maria Bello and Beth Kiesgraf also star. Writer Nancy Cartwright's ("The Simpsons") journey to Italy in an attempt to meet the famed director was not only the inspiration for the film, but was turned into a one-woman stage production Cartwright performed for years. This sweet story that has been put to film shows the passion Cartwright found for the 1954 Federico Fellini film "La Strada" that started a three-decade journey that resulted in the story of what it means to be deeply passionate about something.

Also new on DVD Jan. 30:
"Ray Donovan: The Fifth Season": Los Angeles' pre-eminent fixer is heading into uncharted territory and will soon discover that some damage can't be controlled.

"Legend of the Naga Pearls": Descendant of ancient wined tribe goes on a journey to find magical pearls.

"Steven Universe: The Complete First Season": Cartoon Network's Emmy-nominated and critically acclaimed animated series will arrive on DVD with all 52 episodes.

"East West 101, Series 1": Don Hany stars as a devout Muslim trying to prove himself as a detective in a post-9/11 world.

"Rendel: Dark Vengeance": Dark avenger is born when an undead vaccine is launched.
"Boo 2! A Mad Halloween": When Brian's (Tyler Perry) daughter sneaks off to a party at a haunted campground, Madia sets out to bring her back.

"Napping Princess": Director Kenji Kamiyama's animated tale of a young girl who often enters a dream world called Heartland full of fantastic motorized contraptions.

—Rick Bentley/Tribune News Service



FOX

Pulling back the curtain

Manish Dayal, left, Emily VanCamp, Matt Czuchy and Bruce Greenwood star on "The Resident," airing Tuesdays on AFN-Pulse. "...[W]e are trying to show you the more real complexity of what goes on in medicine today, which is something that actual doctors are writing volumes about," says co-creator and executive producer Amy Holden Jones.

'The Resident' shows dark underbelly of hospitals

By RICK BENTLEY
Tribune News Service

Medical dramas have been a part of television for decades, shining a light on the people who work on a daily basis make life-and-death decisions. They might have personal lives that are in a state of shambles, but once they start dealing with the sick and dying, they are saviors and saints. At least, that's the way network TV programs have portrayed those in the medical profession — until now. The new drama, "The Resident," reveals that not every doctor or nurse is a candidate for sainthood, mistakes happen that can lead to dire consequences and sometimes veteran doctors aren't just valuable sources of wisdom and knowledge, but can also be as deadly as any virus.

"The Resident" co-creator and executive producer, Amy Holden Jones, plus executive producers Antoine Fuqua and Todd Harthan, want the show to be about showing both sides of what happens in a hospital.

"This show has a balance, and I think what we are trying to do most of all is do something no other medical show does," Jones says. "We are trying to show things that you and the general audience don't know about what goes on in hospitals, partially so you can protect yourself and partially because we are tired of seeing the same thing that every show on television is doing, at least on network television.

"It's pretty rosy, in my opinion, on network television. And we have a balance. Every episode has a problem in medicine. It has some spectacular, heroic saves. It has comedic runners. It's not really one or the other. It's trying to draw more from real life than you've seen for a while on a medical show."

The idea of a medical show breaking the mold is new, but the team behind the show knows TV genres have modi-

fied over the years, especially those dealing with crime and punishment. Jones points out changes to the medical TV show blueprint should be accepted by viewers because police and medical dramas have a deep link.

"Doctors and cops are who you go to when your life is really on the line. You may need them to save your life. And in cop shows, they began showing us quite some time ago that it can be an ambiguous thing to have an encounter with a cop," Jones says. "That has never been shown in network medical shows, or very seldom been shown."

"It was more shown perhaps in the days of 'ER' than it has been in the recent years, and so we are trying to show you the more real complexity of what goes on in medicine today, which is something that actual doctors are writing volumes about."

In the series opener of "The Resident," an idealistic Devon Pravesh (Manish Dayal) faces the harsh realities of medical care when third-year resident Conrad Hawkins (Matt Czuchy) takes him under his wing to teach his unconventional methods for treating patients. Meanwhile, Conrad is in a constant battle with the chief of surgery, Dr. Solomon Bell (Bruce Greenwood), who uses power and intimidation to cover up his mistakes.

Czuchy, who has appeared on "The Good Wife" and "Gilmore Girls," was attracted to the project because of how it shows that those being worshipped for their medical skills often have feet of clay, and in the case of Bell, shaky hands.

"It was the first time I'd come across a pilot like this. It was about pulling back that curtain a little bit and showing some of those things that we haven't seen before in the genre," Czuchy says. "What drew me to it as well is I had personal connections, whether it be family members or friends or extended family members who had experienced these situations, whether it be medical

error or the aspects we address of life and death and health.

"And so I thought, if I had these personal connections just in my circle, there must be so many other people out there that have those personal connections, and that excited me about the potential of the show."

Many of the actors, including Emily VanCamp, never thought they would be working in a TV medical drama. She was won over after reading "Unaccountable: What Hospitals Won't Tell You and How Transparency Can Revolutionize Health Care" by Dr. Marty Makary. As soon as VanCamp ("Revenge") finished the book, she knew she wanted to be part of a program that tells these kinds of revealing medical stories.

Many of the stories will orbit around Greenwood's character because Bell has stayed on the job even after the skills that made him the most popular doctor in the hospital began to fade. His story, according to Jones, reflects what happens in hospitals when doctors have a very hard time giving up their careers. That's because many are incredibly passionate about the work, and some feel dead inside the day they have to leave.

Greenwood isn't certain how this will all play out in the series for Bell.

"He's a moving target for the people who want to bring him down because he's reached his best by day. But he's also a moving target for himself because as his faculties begin to diminish, it's hard enough to recognize, never mind admit, that you're going to have to redefine yourself," Greenwood says. "He's in the process of trying to redefine himself, and that obscures his ability to pinpoint when he's crossed the line."

In terms of the ethical boundaries that he crosses, that's the kind of myopia that you can fall into when you're trying to defend yourself against something that's coming from both sides that you can't quite identify.

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

NO TIME FOR THE GYM?

Affordable apps help you get in shape without leaving home

By KELLI KENNEDY
Associated Press

Between bomb cyclones and deep freezes, it's hard to find the motivation to leave your toasty home for a sweat session. Or maybe you're just too cash-strapped after the holidays to fork over \$25 for your usual barre classes.

We've rounded up some at-home workouts at all price points that deliver challenging routines with easy-to-follow instructions so there are no excuses. You can even train just like the celebrities with some streaming services that feature the same routines being taught in New York studios.

From High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) and Zumba to yoga and ballet and more, fitness apps provide step-by-step instructions for little or no cost. The best part? You can exercise in the comfort of your own home.

Free

Fitness Blender

This app rivals pricey competitors. Solid video workouts, tons of options for beginners and elite athletes with programs targeting all various body parts. Cuing from husband and wife duo Kelli and Daniel Segars is easy to follow. Some workouts require weights, but there are tons of videos that require nothing.

Body Rock

Each workout starts with a 20-second video that demonstrates each move. Photo explainers break it down further, along with details about how many reps and rounds. Better for intermediate levels who have some knowledge of basics like lunges, mountain climbers and flies. Some workouts require bands or weights.

Heart and Soul HASfit

Straightforward High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) video routines that pack a powerful punch. Clear instructions make everything in their arsenal a good choice whether you want to work out in 15- or 45-minute increments.

Amazon Prime Zumba

This 70-minute interactive dance workout features 16 high-energy routines that will burn calories while you get your groove on. From Bogota to Beijing and beyond, these international rhythms are so fun it doesn't even feel like a workout. Great for beginners.

30 Days

This 30-day challenge uses slide-style photos to break down moves like donkey kicks and lateral lunges. The app in-

creases exercise intensity step by step to help you build strength and stamina. Each challenge has three difficulty levels, from beginner to pro.

\$20 or less**Weight Loss Fitness**

Find a personalized training plan focused on your problem area. Choose from more than 1,000 workout mixes. \$9.99 a month

BetterMe: Workouts

Targeted workouts just for women. Choose from 28-day programs that target abs, butt and thighs and arms in 15-minute increments. \$9.99 a month

Sfit

Enter your weight loss and muscle goals, measure your fitness level and wait for your customized workout and meal plan. Workouts are 15 minutes or less and are based on HIIT workouts where you move for 20 seconds, rest 10 seconds and repeat. Free option or \$30 plus for workouts and meal plan

Fitness Buddy

Create your own workout routine with 2,400 exercises. Tailor workouts to moves you like or based on the equipment you have at home like resistance bands, kettle bells or no equipment

more than 75 already designed workout routines. Clear instructions and videos. Bonus: this app also is great if you want to transition to the gym and need a plan for tackling free weights and machines. \$2.99 a month

Tone It Up

Daily workouts include HIIT, strength training, yoga and dance moves plus lifestyle videos and tips on superfoods to help you achieve your goals. \$7 a month for a

12-month commitment

Daily Burn

Includes everything from kettlebells to yoga to HIIT at every fitness level, with series for beginners and those that will challenge even the most hardcore athletes. Celeb trainer Bob Harper's subscription also includes a meal plan with daily recipes. \$12.99 a month

Amazon Prime

There are tons of free and low-cost options for Prime members. Subscribe to channels like BeFit, SweatFlix, Yoga Anytime Channel and FITFUSIONTV. The no-commitment monthly fees make it easy to switch up your workouts. Average between \$6 and \$10 a month

Sweat with Kayla

Kayla Itsine is a powerful motivator. Be ready to work hard, but get it done in just 28 minutes. \$19.99 a month. Might be too high-impact for beginners or those who are obese.

High roller**Nicole Winhoffer**

Loved by Madonna and Kate Hudson, Nicole Winhoffer mixes dance cardio and strength training. NW Church gives you access to the hourlong class Winhoffer teaches in New York every Sunday. You'll feel muscles you didn't know you had. \$80 a month

Tracy Anderson

Trainer to J. Lo and Gwyneth Paltrow, Anderson's streaming service includes the Master Class routine she does each week with her clients so you're sweating right alongside her. The online community for #TAmily also offers motivation. \$90 a

month or \$808 a year. A premium service that launched Feb 1 offers additional content for \$40 a month.

Ballet Beautiful

Sculpt a dancer's body with moves that are both graceful and punishing alongside former New York City ballerina Mary Helen Bowers. She trained Natalie Portman for her Oscar-winning role in "Black Swan."

There's something for everyone in her 200 video series, including a post-C-section core rebuild for new moms to the supermodel abs mix. Two new workouts added each month. \$39.99 a month

Barre3

Choose from 300 low-impact workouts that deliver some major core and booty burn whether you have 10 minutes or an hour. Target specific body parts or get energized with a total-body workout. Get ready for some seriously high reps and isometric holds. \$29 a month. Great for beginners or those with injuries.

Body By Simone

Jennifer Garner and Chrissy Teigen are fans of Simone De La Rue's workouts. Each video is only 20 minutes long. Get in and out or string a few together to customize your workout. Videos are broken down by dance cardio, upper and lower body, core. New workouts are added each month. \$14.99 a month or \$120 annually



WEEKEND: FAMILY



Divorce attorney Laura Wasser, who has represented celebrities including Britney Spears and Johnny Depp, poses at her office in Los Angeles. On Jan. 25, Wasser launched a new website and service called *It's Over Easy*, which aims to help couples get divorced online.

The online divorce

Breaking up is easier on lawyer's site

BY ANTHONY MCCARTNEY
Associated Press

For years, Laura Wasser has been one of the go-to divorce attorneys when Hollywood power couples break up.

Now Wasser wants to bring some of the strategies she's developed during her career representing stars such as Angelina Jolie, Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera and Johnny Depp to help regular couples. Her new site, *It's Over Easy*, aims to get couples divorced at their computers or tablets, without having to hire an attorney — or ever set foot in a courthouse.

The website's formal launch on Jan. 25 allows couples throughout California to handle their divorces and child custody arrangements online. Wasser said the inspiration came from her own online shopping habits, and hearing from people who want to handle their own divorces but find the process too confusing, expensive, intimidating — or all of those things and more. "I feel like there's so many people who these days shop online, date online, bank online — maybe they actually even met dating online — and now they're married," she said. "Why not give them the opportunity to do this online?"

She said the site's goal is "changing the face of divorce." It requires both parties to use the site to complete their judgment, although

work is transferable to a lawyer if needed.

The process is based on core questions Wasser asks clients and techniques she uses to try to keep breakups amicable.

Wasser, 49, said she urges people undergoing a divorce or end of a long-term relationship to try to think about the moments they really

It's Over Easy aims to get couples divorced at their computers or tablets, without having to hire an attorney.

cared for the other person, such as when they proposed marriage or at the birth of a child. "Try to get back to them and realize that there is something good that did come out of your relationship. Focus on that and try to find a way forward," she said. "It's so much better for your emotional health to be able to do that way."

It's Over Easy is part service-oriented and part-lifestyles site. Users fill in financial information and details about what days are most important for them to have their children. At the end of process, both sides will have documents that can lead to legal divorces and custody agreements.

The site has three tiers, ranging from \$750 for a guided do-it-yourself filing to a premium, \$2,500 service that includes filing of court

documents, 90 minutes of mediation counseling and document filing with the court.

Wasser's services, by comparison, start with a \$25,000 retainer and \$850 an hour.

The site could even work for some of her clients. "I think there are probably some that can go through this process. They probably wouldn't mind seeing me less, paying me less," she joked.

Other sites offer similar services, such as Wevorce, which is affiliated with another online legal resource, LegalZoom. But those services aren't fronted by a lawyer like Wasser, who doesn't comment about her celebrity clients but is familiar to readers of TMZ and other celebrity sites.

Wasser became a family law attorney after she finished law school and her marriage was coming to an end. She asked her father, divorce lawyer Dennis Wasser, for a job. Her first assignment was to handle her own divorce.

As for concerns that the site will make it too simple for couples to divorce, Wasser is skeptical.

"We're not making it too easy," Wasser said. "Divorce is very difficult, but it is happening. And I hardly think that anybody is going to see ... our advertisements and go 'Oh I hadn't even thought of that. Now I'm going to get divorced.'"

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Forget the past and pass the pork

It was another gloomy winter afternoon in our working-class English village. Ever since we'd been stationed at JAC Molesworth in the flat Cambridgeshire countryside known as "The Fens," I'd found myself counting the minutes until my husband, Francis, got home from work.

At that latitude, the sun set around four o'clock, leaving me with nothing to do but pop in a Barney video for our toddler — it was the '90s, after all — and contemplate dinner.

I wandered nonchalantly to the pantry expecting to see the usual lineup of canned vegetables, dried noodles and jarred pickles. But there it was, staring at me from between the peanut butter and salsa with smug indignation. It had belonged to the woman who had come before me. She had bought it, presumably, for a cozy dinner with the man who was now my husband.

It was her box of Shake 'n Bake.

Michelle was Francis' old girlfriend. Her Shake 'n Bake had, along with her gawd-awful dining room chairs and etched wine glasses, mingled with our joint marital property. After we married, I moved in with Francis, and then we moved together three more times. Somehow, the Shake 'n Bake had survived.

At first, I had thought the crumb mixture was Francis'. But then I'd remembered that when I met him, his diet consisted of baloney sandwiches, cereal and takeout. The Shake 'n Bake must've been Michelle's.

I had put up with the chairs and glasses out of necessity — we needed all the hand-me-downs we could get back in those early days — but I didn't need this lousy box of Shake 'n Bake.

I didn't use tawdry cooking shortcuts. It was cheap, just like Michelle with her frizzy red hair, overdone makeup and Boy George hats. I wanted to be rid of this relic of Francis' past life, once and for all. The vacuum-sealed pouch of pork chop coating hadn't expired, but I sentenced it to death. I grabbed the offending box from the shelf and headed for the rubbish bin.

But wait, I thought. Why not use this as a teaching moment?

The mixture seemed surprisingly fresh for being four years old. I followed the package instructions, throwing meat into the bowl with the pouch ingredients and laying the coated pieces out on a cookie sheet.

When Francis arrived home, our "Michelle Memorial Dinner" was ready.

I eagerly anticipated his reaction to the meal. I envisioned the disappointment that would most certainly appear on his face as he bit into the cheapened chop. I would ask innocently, "Do you like it, honey? I made it with that old box of crumb coating. Wasn't it ... oh, what's her name again ... Michelle's Shake 'n Bake?"

Surely he would spit the bite into his napkin and declare the meal a culinary embarrassment. He would confess that I was a much better cook than Michelle. That I was the love of his life, and Michelle was a mistake. "Smells good," Francis said as I doled pork, green beans and potatoes onto his plate. He carved a particularly large bite of pork, plunged it into his potatoes and opened wide.

I watched intently for a grimace, a groan, a gag.

"Mmm," Francis mumbled, shoveling forkfuls into his mouth. I waited patiently for my opportunity to blame Michelle for his inevitable disgust.

"This is delicious, hon," Francis said, spearing a second chop. I nibbled a bite myself, and had to concede that he was right. The Shake 'n Bake wasn't half bad after all.

I realized that I was the only culinary embarrassment in our kitchen that night. The Shake 'n Bake hadn't been a threat to my marriage any more than Michelle had been.

I was being silly.

I confessed my "Michelle Memorial Dinner" plot, and we both laughed hard at my ridiculousness. I raised a glass to Michelle, giving credit where credit is due, and promised to make her signature recipe again.

After all, it wasn't a mistake, it was just Shake 'n Bake.

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari's columns at: themeatandpotatoesoflife.com
Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com

WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

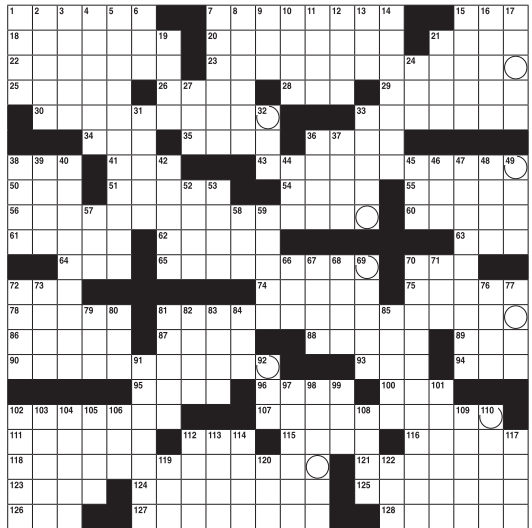
NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

SURPRISE ENDINGS
BY PRISCILLA CLARK AND JEFF CHEN / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

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1 Small house in the Southwest
7 Covert missions
15 Select
18 Wading birds
20 Light, catchy tunes
21 "Je t'____"
22 Cite
23 Plump launches career in rap ... BUT HAS AN EPIC FAIL!
25 Father of Paris, in myth
26 Apple buy-product?
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30 Cabby saves prostitute ... WITH HIS BLATHERING!
33 Labatt, for one
34 Composer known for mood music
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38 Tropicana products, for short
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43 Guy makes a new best friend ... WHO TURNS OUT TO BE A COMMUNIST!
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61 Facial expression often accompanied by "Heh, heh, heh"
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63 Pink-slip
64 ____ Equis (Mexican beer)
65 Chap gets life lessons from kid ... WHO'S REALLY AN ANDROID!
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102 Kind of knot

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116 Greeting on Maui
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105 ____ Scott
106 "Positively Entertaining" cable network
108 Le Pew of Looney Tunes
109 "That's the truth!"

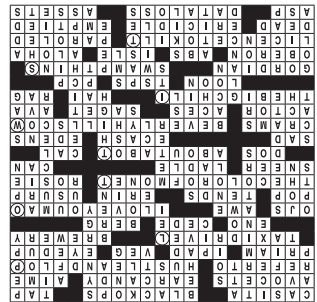
110 Makeshift ghost costume
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FACES



More than a Western

Christian Bale stars as cavalry captain in his latest film, 'Hostiles'

ENTERTAINMENT STUDIOS MOTION PICTURES/AP

I'm always in the market for something that would

obsess me. This is not a black-hat, white-hat Western. ... What was fascinating to me was it's not for the faint of heart, but neither is America's history. It's harsh and it addresses who we are in a very visceral way."

Rosamund Pike, left, and Christian Bale star in the film "Hostiles." The film is set in 1892. Part of his preparation for the role of cavalry captain Joseph Blocker, was to learn the Cheyenne language.

By COLIN COVERT
Star Tribune

The frontier drama "Hostiles" stars Christian Bale as cavalry Capt. Joseph Blocker, a renowned Native American hater nearing retirement in 1892. His last assignment is to escort a recently released Cheyenne war chief and his family on a dangerous trek from New Mexico back to his Montana homeland.

The film combines Army and Indian lore, atmospheric authenticity, violent conflict and a passionate appreciation of the Rocky Mountains. In those features, it's a Western like many others.

But it's what's different that drew Bale to the project. It is based on fact. The tribe had been deceitfully transported by the government from their ancestral area to the barren and bleak desert southwest. As Bale noted in a recent phone conversation, "Hostiles" aims to go deeper than sheer cli-

ches to address the plight of Native Americans who were treated like aliens in their own country.

"I'm always in the market for something that would obsess me," he said. "This is not a black-hat, white-hat western. It's not your mom and pop's western. It's not a propaganda Western of good cowboy, bad Indian. What was fascinating to me was it's not for the faint of heart, but neither is America's history. It's harsh, and it addresses who we are in a very visceral way."

Bale plays a man who intimately knows the scars of battle. After decades in the military, "he understands fully the pain of seeing brothers in arms killed, and he feels the hatred stemming from that."

While Cheyenne Chief Yellow Hawk (played by Wes Studi) had led some of the battles that killed his soldiers, Blocker holds him in respect. He knows that he would have acted the same way "if his culture and way of life was under attack" as

Natives were under the doctrine of Manifest Destiny. As the nation began to emerge as a global power in the late 19th century, the theory argued that its white Protestant citizens were entitled by God to occupy whatever land they pleased in North America, Central America or overseas, despite whoever owned it.

With Yellow Hawk as the defender and Blocker as the attacker, "he's fully aware that Manifest Destiny, practically, is grabbing land and genocide," Bale said.

When the political winds change, the government releases the ailing chief as a PR stunt, a move Blocker considers a loathsome act by civilian politicians. On their 1,000-mile journey, the two men grapple with how to move beyond hatred and guilt. Though he says "There is no other way," Blocker knows there is, but a soldier must follow his orders.

"That to me is a fascinating story," Bale said, made all the more meaningful by Blocker's stoic behavior. "The leader cannot show vulnerability, but you get a circle of characters around him who do so," reflecting what's happening in his gut.

Road trip

The filming was unusual in that it was done almost entirely on location and chronologically, beginning in the arid landscapes of New Mexico and gradually proceeding north and up in altitude to the greenery and trees of Colorado. How ruggedly beautiful it is, but how horrific it is at the same time," Bale said.

Part of his preparation for the role was to learn the vanishing Cheyenne language. "Sadly, the speakers number in the hundreds." He was taught by Northern Cheyenne Chief Philip Whitman Jr. Hiring him was a wonderful decision, Bale said.

"He came down to advise me, and he would not teach me the language until I learned the culture. We did many, many hours talking with one another until he said, 'All right, Chief Philip, you're a beautiful, poetic language,' spoken at length in several scenes.

'Black Panther' presales outpacing previous superhero movies

From wire reports

Advance ticket sales to Marvel's "Black Panther" are outpacing all superhero movies on Pandango.

The online ticket service said Wednesday that "Black Panther" is currently outselling its previous record-holder for presale, 2016's "Batman v Superman." Following gushing early reaction from Monday night's premiere, Ryan Coogler's film is the top daily ticket-seller on Pandango.

"Black Panther" opens Feb. 16, and anticipation is strong for the first superhero movie in years starring a black lead character. Analysts are forecasting a President's Day weekend debut for "Black Panther" of at least \$100 million in North America.

Wagner considered 'person of interest' in death

Actor Robert Wagner is being labeled a "person of interest" in the drowning death of Natalie Wood nearly four decades ago.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department said in an upcoming interview

with CBS' "48 Hours" that after continuing the investigation over the years, Wagner, now 87, has become of interest since he was the last person to see Wood.

"As we've investigated the case over the last six years, I think he's more of a person of interest now," Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Lieutenant John Corina said. "I mean, we know now that he was the last person to be with Natalie before she disappeared."

The actress was married to Wagner from 1972 to her death in 1981. She drowned off the coast of Catalina Island, Calif., in November 1981 after she went missing from her family's yacht. Captain Dennis Davern and Wagner's friend, actor Christopher Walken, were also aboard. Her death was initially ruled an accident, but in 2011 the case was reopened and a death certificate was issued with the cause being "drowning and other undetermined factors."

Civil rights song now part of public domain

The civil rights anthem "We Shall Over-

come," which has been quoted by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and was made popular by folk singer Pete Seeger, has been declared a part of public domain.

Ludlow Music, the song's publisher, agreed in a New York federal court last week to back down on claims of copyright after losing a summary judgment in the case. The publisher said in a stipulation filed Jan. 26 that it waived the right to appeal the judge's opinion and agreed that the melody and lyrics are "dedicated to the public domain."

The lawsuit was filed by the We Shall Overcome Foundation, a group that wanted to make a documentary about the song, and Butler Films, which produced the 2013 film "The Butler."

Other news

■ Diane Lane and Greg Kinnear are joining "House of Cards" for the political thriller's final season. Netflix said they'll play siblings in the show's sixth season, which resumed production Wednesday. A debut date has yet to be announced.

■ The 25th South by Southwest Film Festival will kick off with John Krasinski's third directorial effort: supernatural thriller "A Quiet Place." The Austin, Texas, festival announced its slate Wednesday. SXSW's film festival is March 9-18.

■ Country singer and musician Marty Stuart says he's planning to develop a museum and performance hall in his Mississippi hometown to display his collection of 20,000 country music artifacts, including handwritten lyrics from Hank Williams. Marty Stuart's Congress of Country Music will be in Philadelphia, about 50 miles northeast of Jackson. "There's so much legacy and legend that comes from here," Stuart said.

■ Wanda Sykes, Gabourey Sidibe and Danny Glover will be among the readers for an audio edition of speeches and essays by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. "The Radical King" is a collection of 23 works by King that go beyond civil rights and emphasize his belief in the redistribution of wealth. The audio and print editions are scheduled for April 3, the eve of the 50th anniversary of King's assassination.

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Max D. Lederer Jr., Publisher
Lt. Col. Michael C. Bailey, Europe commander
Lt. Col. Richard McClintic, Pacific commander
Harry Eley, Europe Business Operations
Terry M. Wegner, Pacific Business Operations

EDITORIAL

Terry Leonard, Editor
leonard.terry@stars.com
Robert H. Reid, Senior Managing Editor
reid.robert@stars.com
Tina Croley, Managing Editor for Content
croley.tina@stars.com
Sean Moores, Managing Editor for Presentation
moores.sean@stars.com
Joe Gromelski, Managing Editor for Digital
gromelski.joe@stars.com

BUREAU STAFF

Europe/Mideast

Erik Slavin, Europe & Mideast Bureau Chief
slavin.erik@stars.com
+41(0)631.3615.9350, DSN (314)583.9350

Pacific

Aaron Kidd, Pacific Bureau Chief
kidd.aaron@stars.com
+81-42-552.2511 ext. 88380, DSN (315)927.3780

Washington

Joseph Caccioli, Washington Bureau Chief
caccioli.joseph@stars.com
+1(202)761.0908, DSN (312)763.0908
Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News
bowers.brian@stars.com

CIRCULATION

Mideast

Robert Reismann, reismann.robert@stars.com
+41(0)631.3615.9150, DSN (314)583.9150

Europe

Van Rowell, rowell.van@stars.com
+41(0)631.3615.9111, DSN (314)583.9111

Pacific

Mari Matsumoto, customerhelp@stars.com
+81-3 6385.3171, DSN (315)229.3171

CONTACT US

Washington

tel.: (+1)202.761.0900, DSN (312)763.0900;
529 14th Street NW, Suite 350, Washington, DC
20045-1301

Reader letters

letters@stars.com

Additional contacts

stars.com/contactus

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Tobias Naegele

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OPINION

Can Trump sustain speech's success?

By KATHLEEN PARKER
Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON

It was a good speech. Calm down. I said good. Despite talking for an hour and 20 minutes, the longest speech since Bill Clinton's much-mocked 2000 stem-winder, Donald Trump's first State of the Union address did exactly what it needed to do: nothing.

It wasn't strident; it wasn't provocative; it wasn't alienating; it wasn't retributive; it wasn't divisive. Except to Democrats who would have sneered in disgust even if he'd said, "I'm sorry for all the ridiculous, mean things I've said the last year."

All disclaimers and critiques aside, there's a rule known to all public speakers: People don't remember what you say; they remember how you make them feel. Only journalists, pundits, politicians, professors and speechwriters will closely examine the content of the president's speech. The rest of America, to the extent they watched the speech at all, will have gone to bed thinking, "Gosh, he was surprisingly good. Maybe there's hope after all."

Listening to post-mortems on television Wednesday morning, I was struck by the consensus that Trump sowed division in his address to the nation. I even heard words such as "horrifying" to describe certain aspects. I'm thinking: You don't know the American people.

The crux of most of the criticism was that Trump gave a speech encouraging unity while doing the opposite. By this they meant he invoked several hot-button issues, such as the "take a knee" movement and the violence of the Salvadoran gang MS-13.

Both of these references among a smattering of others were strictly gratuitous and meant, presumably, to bestir the base. But when compared with the fire and brimstone of his inaugural address, these represent relatively minor flaws. Indeed, most Americans do prefer that people show respect for the national anthem by standing, and they are fearful of the potential for violent characters to cross the border without enhanced security.

To Democratic ears, of course, Trump was fear-mongering and race-baiting, which, while not unprecedented, seems nearly as gratuitous a reaction. This was underscored when Democratic Rep. Joe Kennedy III, during his State of the Union response, intoned: "Vamos a luchar por nosotros." (We're going to fight for you).

Otherwise, it is only reasonable that the president cited laudable benchmarks — economic progress, surging markets (notwithstanding Tuesday's brief plummet), and greater business confidence. Noteworthy are recent stories about people who, through one retirement plan or another, are feeling richer than dogs. Fidelity recently reported that the average annual return for 401(k)s hit 15.7 percent by the third quarter of 2017.

None of these tidings erase errors of Trump's first year in office or the negative impact of his often mean-spirited rhetoric. Nor does it alter the realities of the ongoing Russia investigation, the likely-to-be released memo by the House Intelligence Committee or the administration's general dysfunction. Nor am I inclined to redact the many critical columns I've written.

But it was a good speech. A more complete and fairer appraisal would note that Trump also said plenty to

engage the other side of the aisle, including a \$1.5 trillion infrastructure proposal and a path to citizenship for 1.8 million immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children, also known as "Dreamers." Naturally, one of the first things to pop up Wednesday morning when you Googled "SOTU and immigration" was that David Duke praised the president for his line, "Americans are dreamers, too." Please. Who cares what David Duke thinks or says?

And by the way, Trump didn't begin his day Wednesday by tweeting. Wait. Let me rephrase that: THE PRESIDENT DIDN'T TWEET!!! OMG!

Not to jump the gun — or the shark — but, prematurely speaking, it would seem that Trump has turned a corner. Overall, his address to Congress was conciliatory in tone; his morning after was free of the usual rant aimed at someone he doesn't like; and his speech, for all the harrumphing in the usual corners, made no matters worse.

It's a low bar, I'll concede, but in a world where he seemed "normal." Is this a new Trump? Can he sustain Tuesday night's aura of gravitas? Can he just not be weird for a while? As in, no more taunting North Korea, no more slamming critics, no more "fake news," and for pity's sake, no more strategized firings. If I may suggest a change, it will not fire Robert Mueller; I will not fire Robert Mueller; I will not fire Robert Mueller.

My friends kept stabbing the keyboard to write: *Don't hold your breath.* But a more productive observation is to say what is, in fact, true: It was a good speech, Mr. President. Congress and the media may feel less crazed. And that, too, is good.

What fact checkers addressed didn't make Page 1

By MARTIN SCHRAM
Tribune News Service

As part of our ongoing effort to help President Donald Trump "Make America Great Again," we are focusing in this State of the Union week on how we can make our mainstream news media as great as we need them to be.

We'll start with America's most famous news agenda setters. The New York Times and The Washington Post, are indeed great newspapers — but not always very good ones. And their shortcomings have a way of rippling (see also: ripples) throughout our mainstream.

Big Page 1 stories in the morning New York Times or Washington Post become big topics for TV's cable news talking heads all day long. Which means official newsmakers and their spokespeople must deal with it. Conversely, if our great newspapers bury a story, or miss it entirely, the real news may end up unnoticed, uncovered or just overtaken by the next rush of the new day's ordinary news.

So it makes a difference just what our media's news decides to choose as our prominent Page 1 news. And for some time now, the deceptions, distortions and downright lies politicians and public officials tell is no longer considered surefire Page 1, prime-time news. (Unless of course it's about sex.)

Still, news-deciding editors are proud to say they value fact-check journalism. Even though they apparently think readers think it's just boring journalism. So even our great newspapers usually bury their fact-check journalism on inside pages. Even though it might be important news that people really need to know — news that the pols who readers like are deliberately

lying to them.

And that's the way it was with the State of the Union coverage. Wednesday's Post played Glenn Kessler's "The Fact-Checker" at the bottom of page A9, headlined: "Soaring address rife with disproved, deceptive figures." The Times played its "Fact Check" at the bottom of A14, with its very similar findings masked by a more cautious, conclusion-life label-headline: "Assessing Trump's Claims on Immigration, ISIS, the Economy and Taxes."

But the findings of those multi-reporter fact-check teams, plus another by the ever-so-called online RealClearFact.com, indicate that Trump made news by deliberately deceiving taxpayers who trust and voted for him. Yes, Trump's main news was his powerful declaration that the state of America's economy is strong. But Americans also need to know that fact checkers found that while Trump repeatedly claimed he made the economy strong again, credit really belonged to his predecessor, President Barack Obama, for reversing the devastating recession he inherited from George W. Bush in 2009. Fact checkers faulted Trump for boasting: "Since the election, the economy has grown by 3.5 percent, including 200,000 new jobs in manufacturing alone." Because, while the Bureau of Labor Statistics says about 1.8 million jobs have been created since January 2017 (the month Trump became president) that actually was the slowest job growth gain since 2009.

Fact checkers also faulted other Trump claims, including:

■ "After years of wage stagnation, we are finally seeing rising wages." Wages began growing again under Obama, by 2014. Indeed, during Trump's first year as president, wage growth rate slowed, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported.

■ "African-American unemployment stands at the lowest rate ever recorded." Fact checkers said Trump repeatedly claimed in his campaign that black unemployment was over 58 percent, ridiculing Bureau of Labor Statistics figures that it was 19.2 percent. Obama reduced that figure to just 7.7 percent. Now that the BLS says it has inched down to 6.8 percent, suddenly Trump has embraced that stat — to con voters into believing he deserves credit.

Fact checkers ridiculed Trump for lying to taxpayers Tuesday night about the size of his tax cut. Just that night, the American people from this podium 11 months ago, we enacted the biggest tax cuts and reform in American history." It was the 57th time he'd claimed that — even though Treasury Department statistics show Trump's tax cut is about 0.9 percent of the gross tax revenue. That's 1 percent less than Ronald Reagan's tax cut of 2.89 percent of GDP in 1981. By that valid measure, Trump's tax cut was even smaller than two of Obama's tax cuts.

Fact checkers also reported that Trump didn't deserve credit he took for bringing about the tax cuts. Just that night, 11 companies are now building and expanding plants in the United States — something we have not seen for decades. Chrysler is moving a major plant from Mexico to Michigan." Yes, the journalists reported, but the plan began during Obama's administration.

Truth be told, a more accurate State of the Union headline might have been: "Trump boasts of following in Obama's successes." Unless you think someone might call that fake news.

Martin Schram, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, is a veteran Washington journalist, author and TV documentary executive.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

Venturing to cut health costs
Los Angeles Times

Berkshire Hathaway Chairman Warren Buffett is known as a "value" investor — someone who buys into companies that are selling for less than they're really worth. When his company provides its workers health care benefits, however, Buffett isn't paying for value. Instead, employers like Berkshire, which owns a diverse portfolio of financial and industrial companies, are paying ever-higher amounts for their workers' policies and getting less coverage in return.

The problem helped drive Berkshire Hathaway to announce plans Tuesday to join forces with Amazon and JPMorgan Chase to create an independent venture that aims to reduce their health care costs while improving employee satisfaction. Notably, they said the new company will be "free from profit-making incentives and constraints."

What this new company will do, though, is anybody's guess. "Our group does not come to this problem with answers," Buffett conceded. Nevertheless, it's a welcome signal that companies are finally trying to rein in the rising cost of health care rather than simply passing more of the pain on to their employees.

With more than 1.2 million employees worldwide combined, Amazon, Berkshire and JPMorgan Chase have the kind of bargaining power that could make a dent in what their workers are spending on hospital, prescription drug and outpatient care. But let's be realistic. Even employers this large don't have a lot of leverage over the sole manufacturer of a blockbuster drug, or the only obstetrician in a rural county, or the dominant hospital chain in a region.

That's why the other aspect of the companies' effort — using technology to help employees better manage and obtain care — may be more promising. Because part of the solution is to reduce the demand for care by helping Americans stay healthier, and to increase competition by helping people shop more intelligently for health care services.

If this new effort helps Amazon's more than 540,000 employees stay healthier and find high-quality, lower-priced services, it could ultimately offer consumers something better than step trackers and Ace Hardware. But we won't know until we see the answers the three companies and their new venture eventually have to offer.

Memo used as a political pawn
The Washington Post

Far be it from us to oppose the disclosure of sensitive government information, subject to appropriate, and appropriately limited, national security considerations. Sunlight can indeed be the best disinfectant. Yet no one should confuse the House Intelligence Committee's decision to release a much-ballyhoosed "memo" written by Republican staff and purportedly describing malfeasance at the Justice Department and FBI, with a good-faith exercise in legislative oversight.

Let us not be misled by the mischievous attempt to discredit the institutions responsible for assisting special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation of Russia's interference in the 2016 election and any connection Donald Trump's campaign might have had to it. Promoted by the actions of committee Chairman Devin Nunes, R-Calif., the "#ReleaseTheMemo" campaign



is not just partisan but hyperpartisan, a pet cause of GOP House ultras and their media cheering section that appalls more sober Republicanism in the Senate and executive branch agencies.

No doubt there is cause for legitimate concern in the politically tinged text messages exchanged by now-sidelined FBI official Peter Strzok and FBI lawyer Lisa Page, who, in conducting an extramarital affair, discussed both that and their worries that Trump might win in 2016, in writing. There might similarly be cause for concern if the Justice Department unduly relied on dubious, Democrat-funded sources in its request for a warrant to conduct surveillance on Carter Page, a Trump campaign official whose murky ties to Russia aroused suspicion in intelligence circles in the United States and abroad. These are said to be the issues raised in the now-notorious memo — though for all we know, the actual accusations, if and when we finally see them, may prove to be overblown, not shocking," as Republican House members claim. The committee's Republican majority has denied Democrats a chance to publish their competing take on the intelligence simultaneously with the GOP version of events, which does not inspire confidence in the objectivity of the latter.

The way for Congress to investigate all of this should have been aggressively but soberly, seeking cooperation from the agencies involved and maintaining a bipartisan spirit on the committee. Instead, Nunes has maximized the hullabaloo surrounding the events in a manner plainly calculated to inflame public opinion.

Damage is also being done to the political integrity and lead perceived, of federal law enforcement. House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., might have called a halt to this, but instead on Tuesday he chose to enable it, endorsing the release of the memo while feebly insisting that it is "completely separate" from Mueller's inquiry. Now the White House has less than five days to object to the release of the memo or approve it, which means that the last check against any possible abuse of this process will be the good judgment of Trump.

Rid board of Nassar's enablers
The New York Times

Larry Nassar had a day of reckoning last week for his years of molesting young gymnasts and other athletes, and he will spend the rest of his life in prison. But the leaders of Michigan State University, where he worked, have yet to take full responsibility for their failures to protect those girls, or to even admit that they went wrong and regain the trust of the public.

To ensure real accountability the university's board of trustees, who pick the university's president, oversee its administration and set policy, should resign to make way for new leadership unencumbered by the Nassar scandal and the recent report by ESPN that the university

concealed allegations of sexual violence by members of its prized football and basketball programs. If the trustees refuse to do so, Michigan's governor, Rick Snyder, and its Legislature ought to remove them.

For about two decades, university officials — administrators, coaches, trainers, even police officers — either dismissed or silenced Nassar's victims, allowing him to abuse several generations of athletes at the university and USA Gymnastics. When one victim filed a complaint with MSU in 2014, the inquiry said his action was medically appropriate. So officials continued to let him treat young women, even while campus police followed up on the complaint.

Separately, ESPN quoted a former sexual assault counselor at Michigan State who described a pattern of disturbing behavior in which senior university officials hid information about sexual assault complaints against student athletes and protected them from punishment.

What is particularly distressing about all of this is that Michigan State's leaders seem to have learned little from the abysmal repute by universities like Penn State and Baylor to reports of sexual abuse in sports programs. Its eight trustees stood behind embattled President Lou Anna Simon, who was aware of the 2014 complaint, until just before her resignation last week. She was embattled because she did not appear to take the Nassar scandal seriously and seemed callous toward the victims. Even her resignation letter struck a tone of defensiveness. "As tragedies are politicized, blame is inevitable," she wrote.

The university resisted commissioning an independent investigation and gave the public the impression that it had hired Patrick Fitzgerald, a respected former U.S. attorney, to run one. It turned out that Fitzgerald was representing, not investigating, the school. Belatedly, last Friday, the board said it would "bring in an independent third party to perform a top-to-bottom review of all our processes relating to health and safety."

But the term "health and safety" suggests that this inquiry may not be as comprehensive as the one Penn State commissioned from Louis Freeh, the former FBI director, after the university failed to stop the abuse of boys by Jerry Sandusky, an assistant football coach.

Michigan State's board on Wednesday appointed John Engler, a former Republican governor, as interim president. Many faculty members and students, angered at not being consulted, opposed the move, and some disrupted a board meeting where the decision was made.

The first thing the board ought to do is commission a thorough and impartial investigation by someone of Freeh's stature. The university cannot outsource its responsibility to the state attorney general, the federal Department of Education and the NCAA — all of which have said they are investigating the university. While the

state attorney general can bring criminal charges and the Education Department and NCAA can demand policy changes, only Michigan State's leaders can make far-reaching changes to the university's culture and practices.

University trustees, who are elected to staggered eight-year terms, have no credibility to help the university register change. Snyder could remove the trustees by conducting a public inquiry, and the Legislature could do so after impeachment proceedings. Both could take months. The two trustees who are up for re-election this year have said they will not run again, but all of them should leave.

Vow to end gerrymandering
The News & Observer
of Raleigh, N.C.

The term "gerrymander" arose from an 1812 Massachusetts state Senate district so convoluted for partisan advantage that a cartoonist depicted it as a salamander. Since the mapmaking was done under the control of Gov. Elbridge Gerry, the new political creature was labeled a gerrymander.

Two centuries later, it's clear the artist saw the outline of the wrong reptile. For what politically contorted districts really resemble is a chameleon. When the party in power shifts, the districts change color. Republican and Democrat alike decry gerrymandering when they are in the minority and then impose it with gusto once they regain control. The phenomenon has recently been intensified by advances in computer-assisted mapmaking and Republican willingness to stretch the tactic to the point of creating a one-party state.

This aggressive gerrymandering has fed political polarization at the federal and state level, contributing to gridlock and a loss of public confidence in the democratic process. But now there are signs that the excess may bring an end to politicians picking their voters.

Federal courts, in Wisconsin, North Carolina and Maryland and the state Supreme Court in Pennsylvania have all found partisan gerrymandering a violation of constitutional rights. Ultimately, the U.S. Supreme Court will have to decide the legality, but it's encouraging that the high court even is considering it. Traditionally, gerrymandering was considered a spoil of political victory and perfectly legal unless it violated the civil rights of minorities. Now gerrymandering in any form is coming under legal scrutiny.

While politicians on both sides avoid the outcome of the legal challenges, it is not too early for Democrats in North Carolina to commit to ending gerrymandering here.

Republicans, who enjoy veto-proof majorities in both legislative chambers and combine the state's congressional delegation of 10 to 13 seats with the redistricting power that supports their advantage. It's up to Democrats to pledge now that they will support an end to gerrymandering should they regain the majority.

North Carolina State Sen. Jeff Jackson, a Charlotte Democrat, has moved in that direction by proposing a referendum to the state Constitution that would establish an independent redistricting commission. Republicans, however, dismiss the proposal because it allows the governor an appointment that could tilt the commission in his party's favor. Since 1991, Roy Cooper is a Democrat, and North Carolina's governors have been, some Republican lawmakers are scoffing at the idea.

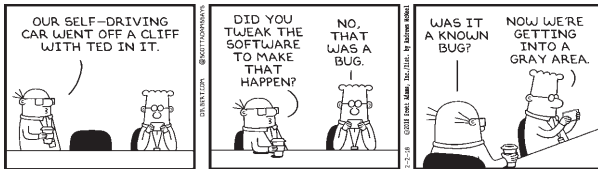
The Republican skepticism is understandable. Any commission that includes a partisan advantage defeats the purpose of the idea. The key is to create a commission in which partisanship is balanced and softened by the inclusion of non-partisan members.

Jackson is willing to try whatever improves North Carolina's contentious and unfair approach. His Democratic coalition should see this as an open commitment to finding a better way.

Frazz



Dilbert



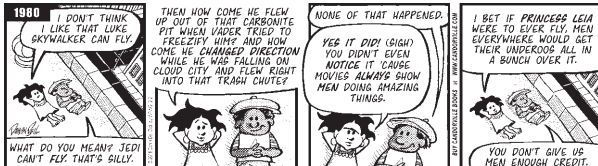
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



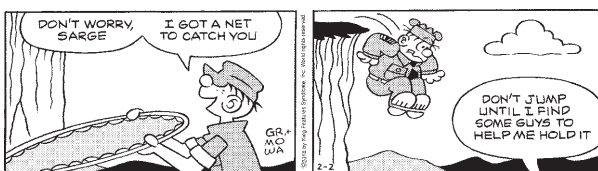
Candorville



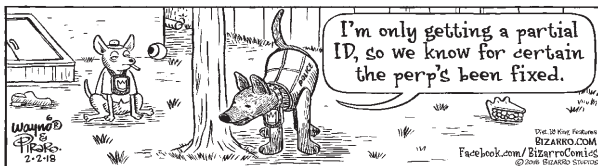
Carpe Diem



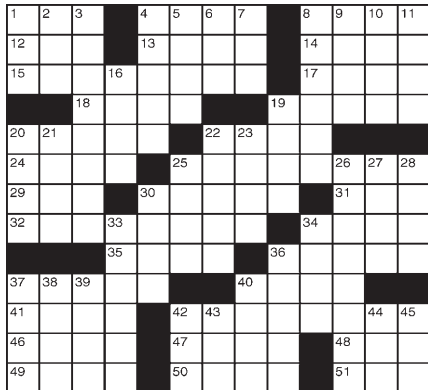
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Upper limit
- 4 Butte's kin
- 8 Six-pack units
- 12 Weed whacker
- 13 Port of Algeria
- 14 Jai —
- 15 Traditional, as values
- 17 Swizzle
- 18 Billions of years
- 19 Entire
- 20 Firetruck necessities
- 22 Duel tool
- 24 911 responders
- 25 Finished
- 29 Genetic letters
- 30 Pigs
- 31 24 hours
- 32 "Texas tea"

- 34 Email command
- 35 Dame Myra at the piano
- 36 Put on a show
- 37 Coffee add-in
- 40 Chucklehead
- 41 Male red deer
- 42 Dentist's directive
- 46 Hybrid fruit
- 47 Pocket bread
- 48 Menagerie
- 49 Complaint

DOWN

- 1 Comedian Margaret
- 2 MSN alternative
- 3 Statue base
- 4 Planet circlers
- 5 Messes up
- 6 Bando of baseball
- 7 Moreover
- 8 Some kind of nut
- 9 Saxophone range
- 10 Hammer target
- 11 Beget
- 16 Troubles
- 19 Existed
- 20 Long lunch?
- 21 Hotel chain
- 22 Wicked acts
- 23 Coralls
- 25 They give a hoot
- 26 Regard as perfect
- 27 Tart flavor
- 28 Jekyll's bad side
- 33 "Suppose ..."
- 34 Pack cargo
- 36 Sub detector
- 37 Great Lakes fish
- 38 Fury
- 39 Perry's creator
- 40 Greek cheese
- 42 Choose
- 43 Diner dessert
- 44 Speck
- 45 Dawn goddess

Answer to Previous Puzzle



2-2

CRYPTOQUIP

SCQ HBCFZYMEX HGRB

RJJCNZSO NCYMMX HQYST

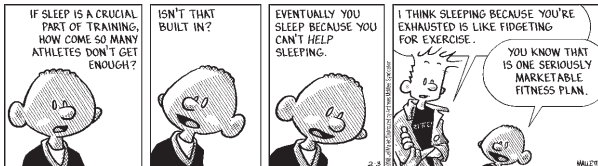
FMREGZSO EGYE NCHCKVMCH

YSZKYM HTZSH: GZAC YSA FGZE.

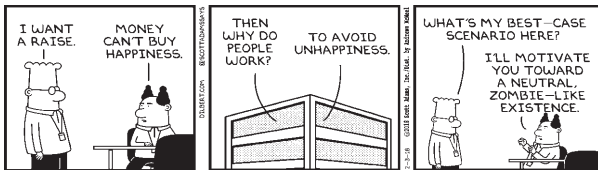
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN YOU'RE PARTICIPATING IN ANY CONTEST OF SPEED AND HOPING TO DO WELL, FLEETNESS COUNTS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: H equals S

Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



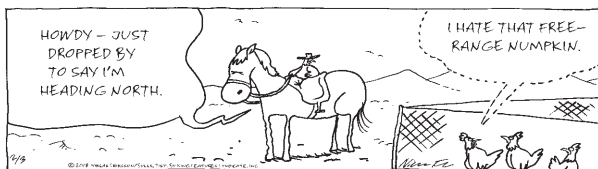
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
15					16					17		
18					19					20		
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25	26	27						28		29	30	31
32								33				
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					37			38				
39	40	41			42	43				44	45	46
48					49					50		
51					52					53		
54					55					56		

ACROSS

- "Peter Pan" dog
- Pocket bread
- Buddhist sect
- Perched on
- Diamond

- Head locale
- Swiss canton
- Incubator noise
- Urban haze
- Napkin's place
- Vend
- Highland hat
- Smooch
- Ecol, watchdog
- Khan title
- Christmas tree shimmer
- Morose
- Chinese or Korean
- Maxim
- Corpulent
- Retaliates
- Biz bigwig
- Distant
- Hardy cabbage
- Army address
- Like morning grass
- Author Umberto
- Green gem
- Vicinity
- Pen tip

- Mellows
- Thailand, once
- NFL six-pointers
- Wife of Jacob
- Coop group

DOWN

- Siestas
- Suit to —
- Yuletide tune
- "Nonsense!"
- Mail-related
- "— Rock"
- Inventor Edison
- Calendar abbr.
- Bantu language
- Historic times
- Pinches
- "Nonsense!"
- Tubular pasta
- Ovum
- Born
- Rx amount
- From square one
- Superman's alias
- Battery fluid
- High tennis shots
- Concept
- Buffalo's lake
- Withdraw gradually
- Orange veggies
- Tokyo-based carrier

Answer to Previous Puzzle

C	A	P		M	E	S	A		C	A	N	S
H	O	E		O	R	A	N		A	L	A	I
O	L	D		W	O	R	L		D	S	T	I
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H	O	S	E	S		E	P	E	E			
E	M	T	S		O	V	E	R		W	I	T
R	N	A		S	W	I	N	E		D	A	Y
O	I	L		W	E	L	L	S		S	E	N
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C	R	E	A	M						F	O	O
H	A	R	T		O	P	E	N		W	I	D
U	G	L	I		P	I	T	A		Z	O	O
B	E	E	F		T	E	A	R		E	T	S

2-3

CRYPTOQUIP

E JCP'Q IM LDQEPH DPRICLR

JYC'G DQQSDAQEFM ITQ

GPCIIEGY. E'FM PC EPQMSMGQ

EP D YDTHYQR YCQQEM.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: NEW SPECIALTY SHOP OFFERING REALLY SWANK CLOTHING THAT RESEMBLES ANIMAL SKINS: HIDE AND CHIC.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Y equals H



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HIGH SCHOOL:DODEA EUROPE



WILLIAM HOWARD/Stars and Stripes

Kaiserslautern shooter Victoria Jackson fires in her unique standing position at a 10-meter target during a marksmanship match at RAF Alconbury, England on Dec. 9.

Shooters get extra incentive at finals

By GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

The first championship event of the 2018 DODEA Europe sports calendar arrives Saturday as Kaiserslautern High School hosts the European marksmanship finals.

The annual event has taken on added meaning this year. For the first time, the European championship meet will also serve as a Junior Olympic State Championship qualifier, providing further incentives and opportunities for the six teams — Alconbury, Ansbach, Kaiserslautern, Stuttgart, Vilsack and Wiesbaden — set to compete Saturday.

Recent history suggests the Stuttgart Panthers will hoard most of the event's available accolades. The program has claimed the last four DODEA Europe team titles while placing multiple shooters consistently among the event's top individual finishers. This year's Panther team looks very capable of extending that run of dominance.

Stuttgart has consistently out-shot and outscored its competition over the course of a five-meet regular season stretching from Dec. 2 to Jan. 27. The Panthers are loaded with proven performers, including seniors Callum Funk, Eileen Dickinson, Macy Kimball and returning Stars and Stripes marksmanship Athlete of the Year Fallon Dickinson.

The reigning dynasty has held off eastern conference rivals Ansbach and Vilsack throughout the winter, but the margin is close enough to make Saturday's final rematch interesting.

Junior co-captains Alyssa Garcia and Mikaela Motherwell, both top-six individual finishers last year, have kept the Panthers very competitive throughout what new coach John Sabala called a "re-building year" prior to the season. Vilsack, a strong second place in Stuttgart last year, finished a close runner-up to the Panthers again in last Saturday's regular-season finale.

Senior team captain Gabrielle Peach has headlined a resurgent Ansbach Cougars program making its first European appearance in three years. Coach Christopher Buchanan said the second-

year shooter "developed more of a democratic style of leadership" over the course of the season, guiding the program to its current success and setting it up for more in the future.

"She is preparing the team not only for Europeans," Buchanan said, "but also next year after she graduates."

Ansbach is joined by small-school peer Alconbury among a six-team field comprised otherwise of much larger Division I programs. Dragons coach John Pardo said his "earning a slot at Euros" makes the season a success for the sport's only England-based program, and credited captain Derek Ratliff for his steady improvement over his four-year run with the program and his infallible consistency as the team's senior cornerstone this winter.

"We could always count on him," Pardo said.

While drawing from a far larger student base than either Alconbury or Ansbach, home team Kaiserslautern is a developing program in its own way. The Raiders take over hosting duties for the marksmanship finals for the first time; the event was held at Vilsack last season.

Raiders head coach Robert Meyer said the opportunity to host is "exciting" for the program, which has been a fixture of the DODEA Europe championship meet since its 2015 debut. But the school is taking the responsibility seriously: Meyer said his goal is a "dignified, efficiently run, safe and enjoyable competition in which the clear winners emerge at the end without controversy."

That's a worthy goal, but it's not the only one the Raiders hold for this weekend. Kaiserslautern, led by returning senior captain Victoria Jackson, has nurtured a slim advantage over western conference adversaries Wiesbaden and Alconbury all winter, and will need a strong performance Saturday to hold off those familiar foes, make a run at Vilsack and Stuttgart and perhaps improve on its third-place showing of a year ago.

broome.gregory@starsandstripes.com
Twitter: @broomestripes

Weekend peek

Teams build tournament cases

By GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

Five DODEA Europe girls basketball teams have managed to reach February without sustaining a divisional loss. In a scheduling quirk, three of those teams have already completed their respective divisional schedules. Still, the final weeks of the regular season hold plenty of ramifications for the Feb. 21-24 European tournament.

Division I

The Naples Wildcats are the only team to survive the ongoing scrum in the large-school girls hoops ranks unscathed, and it's not just because of their location far-removed from their divisional rivals.

Division I's tightly packed German programs have spent the winter locked in back-and-forth combat, and each — reigning champion Stuttgart, 2017 runner-up Ramstein, and contenders Kaiserslautern, Wiesbaden and Vilsack — has sustained at least two losses as a result.

Naples' geography allows it to avoid that week-to-week gauntlet; the team is currently wrapping up its regular season against a string of lower-division regional opponents. But when given the opportunity to prove their Division I bona fides, the Wildcats have delivered.

The centerpiece of this impressive Naples campaign is its 39-35 neutral-court defeat of the defending champion Panthers on Dec. 9. But the Wildcats have also swept a solid Lakenheath team in England, easily handled rival Vicenza and earned a gritty win over tough Vilsack to round out a 6-0 mark.

Naples won't play another Division I game until the tournament. But the Wildcats should see a lot of action at that event, perhaps all the way through Saturday's final.

Division II

At least one team with a perfect divisional record will fail to earn the top seed in the Division II tournament bracket, a result of the three-way, three-country battle currently being waged among DODEA Europe's mid-sized programs.



KENT HARRIS/Stars and Stripes

Naples' Roxanne Sasse goes for two points as a host of Vilsack defenders try to chase her down in the Wildcats' 26-15 win on Dec. 8. The Wildcats went unbeaten against Division I opponents.

Defending champion Black Forest Academy had only two games on its divisional schedule this season, and completed its 2-0 mark with a sweep of Rota. But the Falcons will be plenty tested come the tournament, as they've spent the winter largely punching up at Division I opponents and have scrapped to a very respectable 6-4 overall mark in the process entering a stretch run against Vilsack and Ramstein.

Resurgent AFNORTH jumped into the conversation for the division's top seed with a strong January featuring sweeps of Spangdahlem and Aviano. Like BFA, the Lions have seen their last Division II action until the tournament. Their visit to Ansbach this weekend continues a string of seven games against Division III opponents to end the regular season.

That leaves Marymount as the upstart of the group, and perhaps fittingly as the one with opportunities remaining to prove itself. The Royals are one of four teams participating, along with Aviano, Spangdahlem and host America Overseas School of Rome, in

a two-day Division II meet this weekend. While its tough weekend provides plenty of chances for a misstep, it could also cement Marymount's spot on the short list of viable title contenders.

Division III

Hohenfels, which hasn't seen a DODEA Europe semifinal round since its fourth-place Division II finish in 2015, has methodically moved to the forefront of small-school girls hoops this winter with an impressive run of five victories capped by its Jan. 12-13 dismantling of 2017 runner-up Baumholder.

The Tigers have spent the time since building character in losses to much larger schools, including Vilsack and BFA, and might face a similar fate this weekend at Stuttgart. But Hohenfels can start some fresh divisional momentum on the season's final weekend against Ansbach, and potentially carry it into a deep tournament run a week later.

broome.gregory@starsandstripes.com
Twitter: @broomestripes

Game of the week

Wrestling: Eight-team meet

Vilsack, Stuttgart, Spangdahlem, Hohenfels, Munich, Kaiserslautern, Wiesbaden at Ramstein
Saturday

On paper, the DODEA Europe wrestling postseason starts Feb. 10 with sectional qualifying meets at Lakenheath, Ramstein and Aviano setting the field for the Feb. 16-17 finals at Wiesbaden.

In practice, it may very well start Saturday at Ramstein. Five of Europe's largest Division I programs will share mat and bracket space in the eight-team mega-meet. That pos-

ter includes the defending champion Stuttgart Panthers and their fiercest rival, the host Ramstein Royals.

The two powerhouses haven't competed in the same meet since Jan. 13, but they will see a lot of each other in the coming weeks. The Panthers and Royals are both assigned to the Central qualifier at Ramstein next weekend, and both expect to send their usual large contingents to the championship meet.

Those encounters will grow more important with each passing match. But this Saturday represents a solid starting point for what amounts to a three-week grudge match.

HIGH SCHOOL: DODEA PACIFIC

Seoul American's Steven Petracca gains the advantage on Kadena's Kaleh Wallace in a 122-200 match on Thursday in the Far East tournament. Petracca won by pin in 4 minutes, 24 seconds.

Far East tournament scoreboard

Wrestling

Thursday
Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan
Individual tournament

101
Jasjit Bedi, St. Mary's, tech. Tiana Marsh, Edgren, 10-0, 1:24; John LaFolletta, Kinnick, pin, Angelique McKenzie, King, 3-5; Noah Vasequez, Kubasaki, tech. Marcus Irons, Perry, 11-1, 2:55; Marsh tech. McKenzie, 12-2, 3:45; Bedi pin, Irons, 3:26; Vasequez, Marsh, 3-5; Marsh, 3-5; Cate Herno, Yokota, pin, Vasequez, 3-6.

Semifinals — Lanziotta dec. Bedi, 11-0; Cate Herno, Yokota, pin, Vasequez, 3-6.

108
Jeffre Arco, Kinnick, tech. Aiden Riera, Humphreys, 2-2, 1:33; Joel Pacble, Perry, tech. Samantha Hendrickson, Edgren, 10-0, 1:11; Kaito Hayashi, Zama, tech. Maxwell Harding, Seoul American, 10-0, 4:15; Eli Kasahara, St. Mary's, pin, Arco, 2:17; Grant Rogers, Kadena, pin, Pacble, 5:28; Devin Wilcox, Kubasaki, pin, Hayashi, 1:09; Joel Pacble, Arco, 2:17; DeGrella, Yokota, 3-5; Pacble, pin, Riumoto, 6:46; DeGrella, tech. Harding, 10-0, 3:30; Arco, pin, Hendrickson, 2:17; DeGrella, tech. Pacble, 5:27; Pacble, pin, Hayashi, 3:00; DeGrella, pin, Wilcox, 1:00; Franz, pin, Arco, 1:28.

Semifinals — Rogers pin, Franz, 1:00; Kasahara tech. Wilcox, 10-0, 2:39.

118
Kaiden Meyer, Yokota, pin, Geo. Cano, Perry, 10-0, 1:35; Torrey Brown, Kinnick, pin, Axel Shepherd, Kadena, 1:33; Ty White, Perry, tech. Mario Acevedo, Zama, 12-2, 3:13; Sam Lister, Humphreys, pin, Ira Kader, ASU, 2:15; Luis Veliz, Kubasaki, tech. Hays, 1:09; Joe Frasier, CJA, tech. CJA, tech. Asio, 10-0, 2:23; Harold Mancía, St. Mary's, tech. White, 14-1, 1:40; Berry tech. Cano, 10-0, 1:48; Kader tech. Acevedo, 10-0, 4:59; Meyer tech. Shepherd, 12-2, 2:04; White pin, Berry, 3:28; Kader pin, Meyer, 1:29; Van Druff pin, Kader, 1:35; Lister pin, White, 2:28.

Semifinals — Veliz pin, Lister, 2:26; Mancía dec. Van Druff, 14-10.

122
Jordan Smith, Kinnick, tech. Abigail Gomez, Edgren, 10-0, 1:34; Brad Ponsiano, E.J. King, pin, Van Dam, CJA, 3:53; Steven Petracca, Seoul, pin, Larwyn Reyes, E.J. King, 3:53; Jaylen Mayers, U.S. Ben Lister, Humphreys, pin, Joey DeGrella, Yokota, 1:16; Araki pin, DeGrella, 4-5; Mayers pin, Lister, 4:17; Kojiro Van Osan, pin, Ponsiano, 12:28; Tatsuhito Matsumoto, St. Mary's, tech. Smith, 11-0, 4:54; Petracca pin, Kaleh Wallace, Kadena, 4:24; Wallace pin, Araki, 12:20; sianio pin, Osan, 2:09; Smith tech. Van Osan, 10-0, 1:14; Lister pin, Reyes, 1:51; Wallace pin, Ponsiano, 12:22; Lister pin, Smith, 2:26; Wallace tech. Mayers, 12-0, 4:45; Lister pin, Petracca, 5:50.

Semifinals — Van Osan tech. Petracca, 5:50; Matsumoto tech. Mayers, 10-0, 1:17.

129
James Carpenter, Kubasaki, pin, Dylan Rick, Humphreys, 2:28; Ramli Celones, Yokota, pin, Robert Brewer, King, 2:49; Lucas Wirth, Kinnick, pin, Celones, 3:48; Raphael Gomez, Edgren, pin, Riki Faneli, Zama, 1:00; Dylan Celones, Kadena, tech. Egan Sadler, ASU, 16-6, 4:53; Rio Lemkuil, St. Mary's, pin, Carpenter, 1:27; Carpenter tech. Brewer, 10-0, 3:40; Rex, pin, Celones, 5:19; Sadler pin, Rick, 1:03; Carpenter tech. Gomez, 1:00; Gomez tech. Williams, 13-3, 3:26; Delarosa pin, Carpenter, 4:51.

Semifinals — Wirth tech. Delarosa, 12-2, 1:37; Lemkuil tech. Gomez, 14-8.

137
Pete Touchout, Humphreys, pin, Aiden Higgins, Zama, 1:57; Devon Leary, Kinnick, tech. Touchout, 12-2, 1:17; Connor Brennan, Kubasaki, tech. Levi Rick, Edgren, 14-1, 1:50; Dan Matsutaro, St. Mary's, tech. Kaine Barela, Kadena, 10-0, 3:36; Bryan Williams, Perry, pin, Kyle Eastwood, Yokota, 1:34; Barela tech. Higgins, 10-0, 1:42; Rick pin, Barela, 1:46; Eastwood on Touchout, 2:28; Williams pin Rick, 1:46; Brennan tech. Eastwood, 12-2, 1:29.

Semifinals — Matsutaro pin, Brennan, 3:00; Stanley pin, Williams, 4-8.

141
Koby Karl, Kubasaki, tech. Parker Torrey Brown, Perry, 10-0, 1:53; Jason Ryer, Daegu, pin, Taylor Malcolm, Edgren, 2:16; Juan Mejia, Kadena, pin, Gabriel

Aragon, Yokota, 2:32; Logan Lumabas, King, pin, Kristian Irons, Perry, 5:45; Mason Smith, Kinnick, pin, Mejia, 1:52; Jihon Seo, St. Mary's, tech. Koby Karl, Kubasaki, 10-0, 1:24; Rin Zoot, ASU, tech. Berry, 10-0, 1:11, 1:41; Mejia pin, Karl, 5:15; Aragon tech. Irons, 20-10, 4:22; Berry tech. Torgensen, 10-0, 1:17; Jacob Castro, Kinnick, tech. Berry, 10-0, 1:16; Seo pin, Aragon, 5:53; Lumabas pin, Mejia, 1:23.

Semifinals — Smith tech. Seo, 16-5, 6:00; Zoot tech. Lumabas, 10-0, 3:45.

148
Luke Moseley, Kubasaki, tech. Marcus Inthavay, Osan, 10-0, 1:08; Bryce Ortiz, Kadena, tech. Kenji Kono, King, 12-0, 1:06; Gavin Jackson, Daegu, dec. James O'Grady, Yokota, 11-3; Nishant Chanda, St. Mary's, pin, Ortiz, 1:59; Mason Graydon, Perry, tech. Jackson, 17-4, 3:44; Moseley tech. Cody Dettman, Edgren, 10-0, 1:17; Jacob Castro, Kinnick, tech. Kieran Kell, ASU, 10-0, 4:33; Dettman pin, O'Grady, 2:37; Kell tech. Kono, 10-0, 5:08; Inthavay dec. Jackson, 11-7; Torgensen tech. Kell, 11-8; Inthavay tech. Ortiz, 17-4; Moseley tech. Inthavay, 3-6; Graydon tech. Kell, 11-1, 3:26.

Semifinals — Chanda pin, Graydon, 3:22; Castro pin, Moseley, 3:00.

158
Jacob McConville, Kubasaki, pin, Liam Kell, ASU, 12-0; Bradley McCollum, American School of Bangkok, 5-0; Isaac Devin Rick, Humphreys, pin, Kurt McKenzie, King, 3:11; Fintan Cawley, Kadena, dec. Hawthorne, 10-0, 1:27; Hunter Lane, Daegu, tech. Rick, 10-0, 2:54; Ryan Swenson, St. Mary's, tech. McCollum, 12-0, 2:40; Darius Swenson, Kinnick, tech. McConville, 14-4, 2:21; Andrew Borrero, Perry, tech. Cawley, 10-0, 1:22; Rick pin, Kell, 14-4; McCollum tech. Hawthorne, 11-0, 1:27; McConville pin, McKenzie, 11-0; Norton pin, Cawley, 14-4; McCollum tech. McCollum, 10-0, 1:31; Rick pin, Norton, 1:5; Borrero tech. McConville, 12-2, 2:44; Rick tech. Swen, 21-11, 4:47.

Semifinals — Swenson pin, Sawa, 3:52; Lane tech. Borrero, 10-0, 1:34.

168
Jonathan Dowdell, Zama, tech. Ethan Simpson, Humphreys, 10-0, 1:07; Austin Koslow, St. Mary's, tech. Dowdell, 10-0, 1:20; Cameron Leao, Guerrero, Kinnick, tech. Oakley Mueller, Kubasaki, 12-0, 2:13; Zenon Sadler, ASU, pin, Ethan Celi, Perry, 4:00; Amoun Manville, Seoul, dec. Alex Alexander, Kadena, 10-0, 2:02; Mueller pin, Simpson, 12-5; Cecil tech. Dowdell, 12-1, 2:58; Alexander dec. Mueller, 13-1; Manville pin, Celi, 5:18; Sadler pin, Alexander, 4:52.

Semifinals — Koslow tech. Sadler, 10-0, 4:35; Leon Guerrero dec. Manville, 8-0, 10-0.

178
Brian Cho, Seoul, tech. Jessica Bryant, Yokota, 10-0, 1:12; Austin Fisher, Yokota, pin, Ethan Peterson, Perry, 3:27; Jason Dudley, Edgren, dec. Alex Hernandez, Kadena, 7-4; Daniyal Rahman, ASU, pin, Ryan Teerink, King, 20; Tyler Ryer, Kinnick, tech. Dudley, 10-0, 2:52; Alex Patton, Ryer, 10-0, 1:31; Rahman, 4-0; Cho dec. Erich Gries, Humphreys, 10-9; Nick Burwell, Kubasaki, pin, Austin Fisher, Kadena, 4:45; Peterson tech. Rahman, 10-0, 1:30; Fisher pin, Teerink, 12-0; Dudley pin, Brantley, 3:44; Gries pin, Hernandez, 10-0; Dudley tech. Peterson, 10-0, 1:49; Gries tech. Fisher, 12-1, 1:26; Patton tech. Cho, 6-5.

Semifinals — Burwell tech. Cho, 14-3, 3:24; Patton tech. Ryer, 13-3, 5:26.

215
Chase Quigley, Edgren, tech. Trace Cunningham, Kadena, 21-11, 5:29; Niley Hingari, St. Mary's, tech. Zach Forester, Perry, 10-0, 3:17; Cameron Ewens, Yokota, pin, Hayden Peterson, Kubasaki, 4:04; Chris Mason, Kinnick, pin, Quigley, 2:18; Noah Dobberfuhl, ASU, pin, Brenton Carver, Seoul, 1:57; Cunningham pin, Ryer, 1:40; Peterson, 12-2, 5:30; Ewens pin, Quigley, 2:08; Peterson dec. Hingari, 11-1.

Semifinals — Dobberfuhl pin, Ewens, 5:00; Masdec dec. Hingari, 4-0.

Heavyweight
Mekhi Neal-Garcia, ASU, 4-0; Cameron Joley, Kinnick, pin, Thorpe, 1:12.

Semifinals — Jalen Harrison, Yokota, dec. Joley, 3-1; Marshall China, Ryer, tech. Neil-Garcia, 16-6, 4:27.

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Bangkok again tops Kadena; ASU turns table on Kinnick

Stars and Stripes

Three times Kadena tried to clip the American School of Bangkok Eagles' wings this season. Three times, the Panthers were denied.

Kadena's latest attempt came Thursday, when two-time Division I Most Valuable Player Shanique Lucas outshot 2016 MVP Rhamsey Wyche in the fourth quarter and the Eagles overcame a five-point deficit to beat Kadena 47-42 in the Far East girls combined division tournament final.

"The two girls have had great games against one another," Eagles coach David Lucas said of the repeated showdowns between his daughter and Wyche. "You can't ask for anything better."

On the boys side, American School In Japan avenged its 75-50 loss in Tuesday's D-I final, holding Kinnick to an unusually low total for the high-scoring Red Devils, in a 60-52 upset.

Thursday's was the fourth meeting between the Eagles and Panthers in the past two years at a Far East tournament.

ASB outlasted Kadena 48-45 in double overtime the first time the two schools played in last year's D-I tournament. The Eagles then downed the Panthers 52-31 in the championship.

On Tuesday in the D-I final, ASB held off Kadena's second-half rally for a 44-35 win. On Thursday, Kadena led by five at half before the Eagles turned it on late.

Girls
Thursday's games
Kubasaki 28, Zion Christian 18
Zama 31, Seoul American 24
Kubasaki 38, Daegu 12
Sacred Heart 23, Humphreys 19
Edgren 53, ASU 25
King 30, CAJ 21
Kinnick 42, Kinnick 11
Kadena 23, Yokota 22

13th place
Sacred Heart 20, Osan 14

Ninth place
Zama 31, Kubasaki 9

Fifth place
Edgren 31, King 18

Third place
Kadena 40, Kinnick 23

Championship
ASB 47, Kadena 42

Awards
Division I
Most Valuable Player — Shanique Lucas, American School of Bangkok (two-time selection).

Most Outstanding Player — Rhamsey Wyche, Kadena.

Division II
Most Valuable Player — ASB: Kelsiana Lucas (two-time selection), Rojana Soonthorn, Sun Huang, S. Lucas; Kadena: Wyche, Altira Simms, Isabel Yague (three-time selection); Kinnick: Dallas Carter (two-time selection), Jade McGinnis, Annalicia Santos; American School of Bangkok: Kuba; American School of Seoul American: Krista Bradberry.

Division II
Most Valuable Player — Britney Bailey, Yokota.

Most Outstanding Player — Karen Anastos, Edgren.

All-tournament — Yokota: B. Bailey, Jami Bailey (four-time selection), Jordyn Logue, Bri Johnson; E.J. King: Gabi Shultz; Humphreys: Sidney Wilcox; Sacred Heart: Alisa Belitz; Osan American: Maria Inthavay; Kadena: Leanne Carlson; Zion Christian: Kimberlee Bankhead.

Division II
Most Valuable Player — Britney Bailey, Yokota.

Most Outstanding Player — Karen Anastos, Edgren.

All-tournament — Yokota: B. Bailey, Jami Bailey (four-time selection), Jordyn Logue, Bri Johnson; E.J. King: Gabi Shultz; Humphreys: Sidney Wilcox; Sacred Heart: Alisa Belitz; Osan American: Maria Inthavay; Kadena: Leanne Carlson; Zion Christian: Kimberlee Bankhead.

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"Our goal was to limit the touches for No. 7 [Lucas]," Kadena coach Jonny Cooper said. "We were successful at first. All day long, we had played excellent defense. But it caught up to us. To box-and-one for that long is tough. And she [Lucas] just turned it on."

Lucas was held to four first-half points but found the mark again in the second half. Wyche scored just 10 points in the first three quarters before filling the nets with 12 in the fourth.

This was Kadena's fifth loss in its past six appearances in a DODEA Pacific tournament final.

"ASU just law a DODEA Pacific title in the 2013 D-I tournament."

On Thursday, the Mustangs seized a quick lead and raced ahead by 13 points at halftime. All nine Mustangs scored, led by Koki Wiley's 15 points and 10 by Kai Shimoyu.

"We didn't shoot," Red Devils coach Robert Stovall said. "ASU had a good game plan for us, putting a lot of pressure on defense. Usually, if our opponents scored 60 this year, we might win the game."

Davion Roberts of Kinnick led all scorers with 20 points and Bryant Hunt added 15 in the loss.

"We're happy to go home with the Division I title and the Sava Trophy," Stovall said of the Fred Sava Memorial Cup awarded each year to the D-I championship coach.

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American School in Japan's Ray Shino says it is past Kinnick's Davion Roberts during Thursday's final of the Far East combined boys basketball tournament. The Mustangs won 60-52.

MAYA LARVE/Special to Stars and Stripes

NBA



Jae C. Hong/AP

In this 2014 photo, Chris Paul, Blake Griffin, and DeAndre Jordan confer on the court during a Clippers' game. Paul joined the Rockets this season and Griffin was just traded to the Pistons on Monday. With the Clippers not expected to challenge the dominating Warriors or Rockets in the Western Conference, and Jordan's looming free agency, he could also be traded this week.

Griffin deal shows league's direction

With West looking like lock for title, East likely to make noise with trades

By TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

The East is open for business. The West is closed until further notice.

There's the takeaway from the deal where Blake Griffin got sent from the Los Angeles Clippers to the Detroit Pistons, and it may be a theme for the next week or so until the NBA trading deadline. The Pistons see opportunity to contend in the Eastern Conference, while the Clippers know the Western Conference is out of their reach and a full reboot is needed.

They're both right. Other teams are surely thinking the same way.

No rational person would look at the NBA right now and see a logical scenario where the champion this season is anyone besides Golden State or Houston. What Brad Stevens has done in Boston, especially after losing Gordon Hayward on opening night, is coach-of-the-year stuff. Toronto is better than most fans may realize. Cleveland has LeBron James, still the best player alive.

Yet would anyone other than Celtics, Raptors or Cavaliers fans pick those teams to beat the Warriors or Rockets in a best-of-seven?

Probably not. As such, what happened late Monday makes a great deal of sense for the Clippers and Pistons.

Start with Detroit: Griffin is oft-injured, but he's only 28 and under contract for at least the next three seasons. When he's right, there are few frontcourt players better. He and Andre

Drummond — locked in for at least two more seasons — could be a frightening duo, given that this is a league where productive bigs are an increasingly endangered species. If this works, the Pistons could make noise in the East relatively quickly.

And now, the Clippers: The best-case scenario this year was a brief playoff appearance. And that was a maybe. After going all-out to woo Griffin and sign him to an enormous contract last summer, they sent him away seven months later. DeAndre Jordan is free to walk this summer, so it would be a shock if he wasn't traded in the next few days. They could have a ton of money to spend starting July 1, maybe two first-round draft picks as well.

The Pistons believe they can make noise in the East.

The Clippers know they weren't going far in the West.

So they did the next best thing: They entered The LeBron Sweepstakes.

There will almost certainly be another LeBron this summer. James loves Los Angeles, has a home there, has off-court interests that might make spending more time in Hollywood an appealing proposition. James won't play for any team that doesn't have a shot at winning a title, so the Clippers will have to do some serious planning and be ready to do some serious buying if they're going to make this happen.

It's not a guarantee that James will leave Cleveland. If he does, maybe the Lakers will appeal to him, or Philadelphia, with a young roster and players he likes. Or San Antonio, which has Gregg Popovich — a coach James

reverses. But if Griffin was still in L.A., there would have been virtually no chance that James would be a realistic target for the Clippers this summer.

To catch Golden State and Houston, someone is going to have to assemble a superstar — like Miami did in 2010. Going the Philly route, with that multi-year cycle of tanking and drafting, tanking and drafting, tanking and drafting, takes a lot of time and a lot of luck. It's more likely to come together through free agency, where the Clippers now may be a major player.

The Pistons won't be. They're all-in now, a team that will try to build around bigs in an NBA where everyone shoots the three like never before. It's bold.

Now the question becomes which other teams in the East will make splashes.

Cleveland is trying to make moves in an effort to help James get to the NBA Finals for an eighth straight year. Up in Boston, Danny Ainge is probably looking for another piece — whether Hayward makes a dramatic late-season return or not. Miami will talk deals, maybe even including the supremely talented yet often enigmatic Hassan Whiteside. Washington is in a tough spot with John Wall out for, at least, most of the remaining regular-season schedule.

East teams should think buy. West teams should think sell.

The Griffin trade is the annual reminder: Things can change very quickly in the NBA, and sitting still is rarely the right option.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	37	17	.712	—
Toronto	34	15	.694	1½
Philadelphia	34	24	.590	11
New York	23	29	.442	14
Brooklyn	19	33	.365	18
Southeast Division				
Miami	29	22	.569	—
Washington	28	22	.560	½
Charlotte	21	29	.420	7½
Orlando	15	35	.300	13½
Atlanta	15	36	.294	14
Central Division				
Cleveland	30	20	.600	—
Indiana	29	23	.558	½
Milwaukee	27	22	.551	2½
Detroit	23	26	.469	6½
Chicago	18	33	.353	12½

Western Conference

Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	36	13	.735	—
San Antonio	34	19	.642	4
New Orleans	27	23	.540	9½
Memphis	18	32	.360	18½
Dallas	16	36	.308	21½
Northwest Division				
Minnesota	32	22	.593	—
Oklahoma City	30	21	.588	½
Portland	22	28	.439	1½
Denver	26	25	.510	4½
Utah	12	28	.440	8

Friday's games

Washington 102, Oklahoma City 96
New York 111, Brooklyn 95
Toronto 109, Minnesota 104
Detroit 125, Cleveland 114
Houston 114, Orlando 107
Sacramento 114, New Orleans 103
San Antonio 106, Denver 104
Utah 129, Golden State 96
Portland 104, L.A. Clippers 96

Wednesday's games

Indiana 105, Memphis 101
Orlando 127, L.A. Lakers 105
Brooklyn 116, Philadelphia 108
Charlotte 123, Atlanta 110
Cleveland 121, Miami 88
Boston 103, New York 73
Phoenix 124, Oklahoma City 108
Phoenix 102, Dallas 88

Thursday's games

Memphis at Detroit
Toronto at Washington
Houston at San Antonio
Milwaukee at Minnesota
Oklahoma City at Denver
Indiana at Charlotte
Atlanta at Boston
L.A. Lakers at Brooklyn
Portland at Brooklyn
Miami at Philadelphia
New York at Milwaukee
New Orleans at Oklahoma City
Utah at Phoenix
Chicago at Sacramento

Saturday's games

Utah at L.A. Clippers
Miami at Detroit
Philadelphia at Indiana
Washington at Orlando
Houston at Cleveland
Brooklyn at New Orleans
New Orleans at Minnesota
Dallas at Sacramento
Portland at Atlanta
Milwaukee at Brooklyn
Washington at Phoenix
Memphis at Toronto
Charlotte at Oklahoma City

Leaders

Scoring					
	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Harden, HOU	45	46.6	32.7	1282	28.5
Antetokounmpo, MIL	45	46.6	32.7	1282	28.5
James, CLE	50	50.9	22.7	1330	26.6
Durant, OKC	44	42.2	29.0	1162	26.4
Durant, OKC	43	39.3	20.7	1101	25.6
Westbrook, OKC	46	42.6	25.0	1299	25.5
Cousins, NOR	48	40.6	29.4	1210	25.2
Lillard, POR	48	40.6	29.4	1210	25.2
Irving, BOS	48	43.8	19.1	1193	24.9
BeZozan, TOR	49	42.0	30.5	1198	24.4
Beal, WAS	40	43.0	28.0	1102	24.4
Embiid, IND	47	41.0	19.0	1124	23.9
Beal, WAS	40	43.0	28.0	1102	24.4
Blanchard, PHI	38	31.4	24.0	904	23.8
Williams, LAC	36	37.7	27.4	1150	23.5

Rebounds

	G	REB	TOT	AVG
Drummond, DET	47	348	717	15.3
Jordan, LAC	45	194	670	14.9
Howard, LAC	45	213	1002	14.4
Howard, LAC	50	176	466	13.7
Towns, MIN	54	156	500	12.6
Embiid, PHI	48	133	417	11.9
Capela, ATL	44	142	333	10.8
Davis, MEM	45	139	359	10.8
Jokic, DEN	44	118	340	10.8
Antetokounmpo, MIL	45	359	464	10.3

Assists

	G	AST	AVG
Westbrook, OKC	51	513	10.1
Wall, WAS	37	343	9.3
Harden, HOU	42	381	9.1
James, CLE	50	434	8.7
Simmons, PHI	48	392	7.3
Green, GOL	44	321	7.3
Ball, LAL	36	255	7.1
Rondo, BOS	42	252	7.4
Teague, MIN	43	297	6.9
Lowry, TOR	46	305	6.6

NHL

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference						
Atlantic Division						
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Tampa Bay	50	24	13	3	175	128
Boston	48	29	11	8	66	157
Toronto	52	29	18	5	71	167
Detroit	49	20	21	8	48	128
Florida	48	20	22	6	66	156
Montreal	50	20	24	6	46	130
Ottawa	48	15	24	9	39	125
Buffalo	50	14	27	9	37	115
Metropolitan Division						
Washington	49	15	23	3	65	155
Pittsburgh	52	28	21	3	59	156
New Jersey	49	25	16	8	58	147
Columbus	50	27	19	8	58	133
Philadelphia	50	24	18	8	56	144
N.Y. Rangers	50	25	20	5	55	153
N.Y. Islanders	52	25	22	5	55	173
Carolina	50	23	19	6	54	139

Western Conference						
Central Division						
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Winnipeg	51	30	13	8	68	167
Nashville	48	29	12	5	65	146
St. Louis	52	31	18	3	65	151
Dallas	51	28	19	4	60	155
Minnesota	50	27	18	5	59	147
Colorado	49	27	18	4	58	160
Chicago	50	24	19	7	55	148
Pacific Division						
Vegas	50	32	16	8	70	168
San Jose	50	26	16	8	60	146
Los Angeles	50	27	18	5	59	142
Anaheim	51	25	17	9	59	144
Calgary	50	25	17	8	58	139
Edmonton	49	22	24	3	47	135
Vancouver	50	20	24	6	46	131
Arizona	50	12	29	6	33	118

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Tuesday's games

Minnesota 3, Columbus 2, SO
Pittsburgh 5, San Jose 2
Florida 4, N.Y. Islanders 1
Anaheim 3, Boston 1
Carolina 2, Ottawa 1
New Jersey 3, Buffalo 1
Winnipeg 3, Tampa Bay 1
St. Louis 3, Montreal 1
Chicago 2, Nashville 1
Toronto 2, N.Y. Islanders 0
Detroit 2, San Jose 1, SO
Washington 5, Philadelphia 3

Wednesday's games

Toronto 2, N.Y. Islanders 0
Detroit 2, San Jose 1, SO
Washington 5, Philadelphia 3
Pittsburgh 5, San Jose 2
Florida 4, N.Y. Islanders 1
Anaheim 3, Boston 1
Carolina 2, Ottawa 1
New Jersey 3, Buffalo 1
Winnipeg 3, Tampa Bay 1
St. Louis 3, Montreal 1
Chicago 2, Nashville 1
Toronto 2, N.Y. Islanders 0
Detroit 2, San Jose 1, SO
Washington 5, Philadelphia 3

Friday's games

Washington at Pittsburgh
Detroit at Carolina
San Jose at Columbus
Vegas at Minnesota

Saturday's games

Ottawa at Philadelphia
Anaheim at Montreal
St. Louis at Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh at New Jersey
St. Louis at Buffalo
Columbus at N.Y. Islanders
Colorado at Winnipeg
Toronto at Boston
N.Y. Rangers at Nashville
Minnesota at Dallas
Tampa Bay at Vancouver
Chicago at Calgary
Arizona at Los Angeles

Sunday's games

Vegas at Washington
San Jose at Carolina
Ottawa at Montreal

Leaders

Goal scoring

Name	Team	GP	G
Alex Ovechkin	Washington	50	30
William Karlsson	Vegas	49	26
Nikita Kucherov	Tampa Bay	50	27
Anders Lee	N.Y. Islanders	50	27
Sean Couturier	Philadelphia	50	26
Evgenii Malkin	Pittsburgh	48	26
John Tavares	N.Y. Islanders	52	26
Brock Boeser	Vancouver	47	24
Nathan MacKinnon	Colorado	49	24
Patrick Laune	Winnipeg	51	23
Auston Matthews	Toronto	42	23
Tyler Seguin	Dallas	51	23
Sean Monahan	Calgary	49	22
James Neal	Vegas	49	22
Logan Couture	San Jose	46	21
Michael Grabner	N.Y. Rangers	49	21

Plus/Minus

Name	Team	GP	+/-
William Karlsson	Vegas	49	26
Zdeno Chara	Boston	48	24
Victor Hedqvist	Tampa Bay	45	24
Brad Marchand	Boston	38	24
Patrice Bergeron	Boston	43	24
Jaden Schwartz	St. Louis	32	23
Reilly Smith	Vegas	49	23
Josh Manson	Anaheim	51	22
Jonathan Marchessault	Vegas	46	22
Austin Brown	Los Angeles	50	20
Brayden Point	Tampa Bay	50	20
Auston Matthews	Tampa Bay	50	19
Radek Faksa	Dallas	50	19
Anze Kopitar	Los Angeles	50	19
Auston Matthews	Toronto	42	19
Steven Stamkos	Tampa Bay	50	19
Yanni Gourde	Tampa Bay	50	18

Around the league

Will Vegas buy at trade deadline?

By STEPHEN WHYNO

Associated Press

The Vegas Golden Knights' unpredictable success has put them in an unexpected spot.

On pace for by far the best inaugural season for an expansion franchise in NHL history, the Golden Knights are closer to winning the Presidents' Trophy as the team with the most points than they are to missing the playoffs. Going into the season, forwards James Neal, Jonathan Marchessault and David Perron all looked like potential trade bait in the final year of their contracts.

Now they are among the leading scorers for a team in first place.

Marchessault has already been re-signed to a \$30 million, six-year contract, Neal was an All-Star and there are no signs that general manager George McPhee will do any kind of the selling off at the deadline that most expected.

"The plan was simple: If we're in the hunt for a playoff spot, we want to stay in the hunt for a playoff spot," McPhee said by phone last week. "And if we're not, we'll do what teams do when they're not in the hunt. The focus every day is to be the best we can be and see where we are come the deadline."

Vegas has a six-game road trip and a seven-game home stand before the Feb. 26 deadline. Visits to Central Division powerhouse Winnipeg, defending Stanley Cup champion Pittsburgh and former McPhee stomping ground Washington will test the Golden Knights, but their jaw-dropping effort so far has given them a 10-point cushion atop the Pacific Division.

In addition to Marchessault, Perron and Neal, William Karlsson has been a revelation with a career-high 27 goals after scoring 28 in his first 183 games. Goaltender Marc-Andre Fleury has been as good as everyone thought he would be after missing time with a concussion, and an unheralded blue line led by Nate Schmidt and Colin Miller has done the job.

Vegas has scored the third-most goals and allowed the fifth fewest. Can an expansion team top the list of Cup contenders? Maybe so, along with the Eastern Conference-leading Tampa Bay Lightning. Would McPhee see any way of being a buyer at the deadline and potentially cutting into the organization's surplus of draft picks and prospects?

"It's hard to answer now because that's a month away," McPhee said. "There's a long way to go between now and then. At this point, we'll try to stay in it. I don't know whether we would add. I don't have the answer to that question."

Perhaps the Golden Knights' only weakness is the power play, where they're 19th in the league.



DAVID BECKER/AP

Center Jonathan Marchessault, left, and goalie Marc-Andre Fleury are two of the primary reasons the Vegas Golden Knights are in position to make the playoffs in their first season of existence.

Tavares watch

While Green is a pending free agent who's expected to be available, New York Islanders captain John Tavares very much isn't. Tavares is 27 and tied for fifth in goals and points. He's also the face of a franchise that will soon be moving to the new Belmont Park complex, closer to many members of their Long Island fan base. In the same spot is fellow Canadian Steven Stamkos, who re-signed with the Lightning in the summer of 2016 just before hitting free agency. Tavares said he hasn't sought out the Tampa Bay captain's opinion or anyone else's.

Green has a full no-trade clause, so he can pick his destination. "I think in this league there's always uncertainty," Green said during All-Star weekend. "I've been around long enough I know how it works and what to expect. I think that's why I don't think about it that much other than I understand the process, and when the decisions have to be made I'll be ready to make them."



JONATHAN HAYWARD, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Colorado Avalanche center Nathan MacKinnon, front, was edged out by Tampa Bay's Nikita Kucherov in midseason MVP voting.

"I try to be myself and be the best I can," Tavares said. "I don't think because it's my contract year my approach or my thought process and the way I play should change. I just got out there on a nightly basis and worry about playing and try and have success and contribute. None of the other stuff comes into my mind when it comes to playing."

MVP race

When the Professional Hockey Writers' Association conducted its midseason award voting, Tampa Bay's Nikita Kucherov edged out the Colorado Avalanche's Nathan MacKinnon for the Hart Trophy. It might hinge on whether MacKinnon can get the Avalanche to the playoffs and who leads the league in scoring. Right now it's Kucherov in the lead.

"His work ethic, his skill obviously is great," Capitals star and fellow Russian winger Alex Ovechkin said. "In the next year or next couple of years, he's going to be the best player or he's going to be one of them."

They said it

"Hockey's a funny game. It goes in 10-game segments. We started off 9-2 and then in our last 11, I think we're 2-9-2. So what team are we?" — New Jersey Devils winger Taylor Hall, who returned Monday after missing three games with a right thumb injury.

Game of the week

The Toronto Maple Leafs visit the Boston Bruins on Saturday in what is becoming an increasingly likely first-round matchup.

AP Hockey Writer John Sawrow in Buffalo, New York, and Sports Writer Fred Goodall in Tampa, Florida, contributed.

OLYMPICS/SUPER BOWL LII

28 Russians have doping bans lifted

By JAMES ELLINGWORTH
Associated Press

MOSCOW—Twenty-eight Russian athletes had their Olympic doping bans overturned Thursday, throwing the International Olympic Committee's policy on the country into turmoil.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport ruling was set to reinstate seven Russian medals from the 2014 Sochi Olympics, including gold in men's skeleton and men's 50-kilometer cross-country skiing.

"This does not mean that these 28 athletes are declared innocent, but in their case, due to insufficient evidence, the appeals are upheld, the sanctions annulled and their individual results achieved in Sochi are reinstated," CAS secretary general Matthieu Reeb said in Pyeongchang.

The IOC said it had taken note of the CAS decision "with satisfaction on the one hand and disappointment on the other," adding the decision "may have a serious impact on the future fight against doping."

The 28 who had their bans lifted could now seek late entry into the Pyeongchang Olympics, but the IOC said "not being sanctioned does not automatically confer the privilege of an invitation."

Russian President Vladimir Putin said the ruling "can't fail to please us, and it confirms our position that the overwhelming majority of our athletes are clean athletes."

However, Putin also called for respect for the IOC, saying in comments reported by state news agency RIA Novosti that "there should not be any euphoria from our side and we need to be calm about this."

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Vitaly Mutko said at a televised cabinet meeting that the government would back further legal action to allow the athletes

to compete in Pyeongchang "if the IOC does not accept them."

Eleven more Russians were ruled to have been guilty of doping but had lifetime bans imposed by an IOC disciplinary panel two months ago out to a ban only from the Pyeongchang Games, which open next week.

In the urgent verdicts announced Thursday, the two CAS judging panels who heard 39 appeal cases last week in Geneva — and took testimony from Russian whistleblower Grigory Rodchenkov — did not give detailed reasons.

"In 28 cases, the evidence collected was found to be insufficient to establish that an anti-doping rule violation (ADRV) was committed by the athletes concerned," the sports court said in a statement.

CAS said it "unanimously found that the evidence put forward by the IOC in relation to this matter did not have the same weight in each individual case."

The 11 whose appeals were rejected came from men's bobsled, women's cross-country skiing and women's hockey.

They included two-time bobsled gold medalist Alexander Zubkov. His re-tested samples had abnormal levels of salt, suggesting his tainted urine was swapped in the Sochi testing laboratory with previously stored clean urine, as Rodchenkov said.

Still, the CAS rulings will be seen as a victory for Russia, which has long denied it ran a state-backed doping program.

"It's a big victory for them and I'm relieved that justice has finally been done," Philippe Baertsch, a lawyer for the athletes, told The Associated Press. "This confirms what they've been saying since Day 1, namely that they are and they've always been clean athletes, and that they were wrongly sanctioned without any evidence."



FELIPE DANA/AP

Matthieu Reeb, CAS Secretary General, leaves a press conference after speaking about Russian athletes who are challenging the decisions taken by the Disciplinary Commission of the International Olympic Committee ahead of the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, on Thursday.



ELISE AMENDOLA/AP

New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady, left, confers with offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels. McDaniels says he's become a much better person and coach for having had a second stint with Tom Brady and Bill Belichick. McDaniels will take over as head coach of the Indianapolis Colts next season.

OC McDaniels wiser after second stint with Patriots

By ARNIE STAPLETON
Associated Press

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — Josh McDaniels didn't know what he didn't know.

In 2009, he was the baby-faced 32-year-old prodigy plucked out of Bill Belichick's roost and Tom Brady's shadow to serve as Mike Shanahan's replacement in Denver, holding down two jobs he'd never had: head coach and de facto general manager.

He'd trade away his starting quarterback, draft Tim Tebow and win his first six games, including one against his mentor. But he was fired halfway through his four-year contract, losing 17 of his next 22 games and presiding over his very own videotape scandal.

The Broncos blamed themselves for giving McDaniels too much power with so little experience. Denver then embarked on a renaissance under general manager John Elway and Peyton Manning.

McDaniels spent a year with the Rams before returning for a highly successful second stint with Brady and Belichick, preparing him for his second NFL head coaching gig with the Indianapolis Colts, which will become official after the Super Bowl.

Now 41, McDaniels still doesn't look his age, but he says he is a much wiser than the brash coach who wore the gray hoodie in Denver eight years ago.

McDaniels said he was a much better trainee and tutor in his return to New England, much more appreciative of the breadth of Belichick's artistry and the depth of Brady's genius.

"It's a unique perspective," seeing things a second time after getting a firsthand look behind the coaching curtain, McDaniels said Wednesday, as he helped Brady and Belichick prepare for their eighth Super Bowl.

"Bill does a tremendous job of understanding the pulse of his team. He relates to everyone very well and I've been able to see that and look at that through a different lens. When we need a push, he pushes us. When we need love, he loves us. When we need a pat on the back, he does that. When we need to run hills, we run hills," McDaniels said.

"He just has a tremendous ability to understand when to do what as a head coach. And he serves us in so many ways to make us better coaches, to make the players better players. He's there to help us, he doesn't take it away from us. Believe me, I make tons of mistakes in my role and he's there to help."

McDaniels didn't think it was possible, but he now holds Belichick in even higher regard than he did during his first stint from 2006-08, because he now realizes all the juggling head coaches have to do.

"A lot of the failings in my career have been some of the best teachers that I've had."

Josh McDaniels
Patriots offensive coordinator and next head coach of the Indianapolis Colts

"Before you leave and you do that, it's hard to say that you know what he's going through because you really don't," McDaniels said. "I'm very happy for the experiences that I've gone through. A lot of the failings in my career have been some of the best teachers that I've had. I've really learned a lot from them, I think I'm a better person, a better coach, a better communicator, a lot of things because of the things that I haven't done well."

One thing he's done exceptionally well is work with Brady, who's going for his sixth Super Bowl ring Sunday when the Patriots play the NFC champion Philadelphia Eagles.

McDaniels has long held that working with Brady made him a better coach, because he always had to be prepared to answer the quarterback's incessant questions, to justify the smallest of his decisions, to explain what everyone's role was on every single play.

"We haven't treated each other any differently. He treats me with the respect of a coach and I treat him like I need to make him a better player," McDaniels said. "We have a tremendous relationship and it's been an honor of my lifetime in coaching to have an opportunity to work with a guy like that as long as I have."

SUPER BOWL LII

Philadelphia Eagles (15-3) vs New England Patriots (15-3)

AFN-Sports, midnight Monday CET;
8 a.m. Monday JKT

SERIES RECORD: Eagles lead all-time series 7-6

LAST MEETING: Eagles beat Patriots 35-28 on Dec. 6, 2015.

EAGLES OFFENSE: OVERALL (7), RUSH (3), PASS (13)

EAGLES DEFENSE: OVERALL (4), RUSH (1), PASS (17)

PATRIOTS OFFENSE: OVERALL (1), RUSH (10), PASS (2)

PATRIOTS DEFENSE: OVERALL (29), RUSH (20), PASS (30)

STREAKS, STATS AND NOTES: Patriots beat Eagles 24-21 in Super Bowl to conclude 2004 season. This will be sixth Super Bowl rematch in NFL history. In last three rematches, team that won first game also won second game. ... This is third Super Bowl in which each team ranked in top five in both points scored and fewest points allowed. Eagles were third in points scored (28.6 points per game) and fourth in points allowed (18.4). Patriots ranked second in points scored (28.6) and fifth in points allowed (18.5). ... Eagles are 0-2 in Super Bowl. Eagles haven't won NFL title since 1960. ... Philadelphia has seven players on active roster who've won Super Bowl. ... Eagles are missing offensive, defensive and special teams captains: QB Carson Wentz (knee), LB Jordan Hicks (Achilles tendon), S Chris Maragos. ... LT Jason Peters (knee), RB Darren Sproles (knee) and K Caleb Sturgis (hip) also sustained season-ending injuries. ... Eagles QB Nick Foles is 72-49-96 (75 percent) for 793 yards, five touchdowns, zero interceptions, and 116.3 rating in three playoff games. His rating is highest in postseason history, minimum 90 attempts. ... Foles is only QB in team history to throw for 300-plus yards and three-plus TDs in postseason. ... Foles and Jo Montana are only two QBs with consecutive playoff games completing 75 percent of passes. ... RB LeGarrette Blount won two Super Bowls with Patriots in past three seasons before joining Philly. Blount has 10 TDs rushing in 10 playoff games. ... Eagles DE Chris Long won Super Bowl with Patriots last season. ...

None of four players who've combined to score Eagles' six TDs in playoffs was on team last year. ... RB Jay Ajayi has 127 yards rushing in two playoff games. ... WR Alshon Jeffery has nine catches for 146 yards and two TDs. ... TE Zach Ertz has 11 catches for 125 yards. ... WR Torrey Smith has eight catches for 108 yards and one TD. ... Eagles haven't allowed point in second half this postseason. ... CB Patrick Robinson had 50-yard interception return for TD vs. Vikings in NFC title game. ... Patriots are appearing in Super Bowl for 10th time. They are 5-4. ... With sixth ring, New England would tie Pittsburgh for most in Super Bowl era. ... Patriots can become ninth team in NFL history to repeat as Super Bowl champions and first since they won back-to-back titles for 2003 and 2004 seasons. ... On 53-man active roster Patriots brought to Minnesota, 32 players have combined 60 games of Super Bowl experience. ...

Brady led NFL with 4,577 yards passing this season. No player to lead NFL in passing yards has won Super Bowl in that season (0-5). Brady, Peyton Manning, Kirk Gannon, Kurt Warner and Dan Marino all lost in Super Bowl after leading league in passing yards. ...

Brady has played in seven Super Bowls and has 5-2 record. ... Brady and coach Bill Belichick will be making eighth Super Bowl appearance together, most NFL title games for any head coach and quarterback duo in league history. Their five victories together are most by coach and quarterback combination. ... With victory, Belichick would pass Vince Lombardi and tie George Halas and Curly Lambeau for most NFL championships by coach in league history. ... RB James White has scored six touchdowns (four rushing, two receiving) in his past three postseason games. Over past two seasons (2016 and 2017), White leads NFL with seven total touchdowns and 44 points scored. ... TE Rob Gronkowski has 10 career playoff TD receptions. He trails only Jerry Rice (22) and John Stallworth (12) for most in NFL playoff history.



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

New England Patriots defensive tackle Ricky Jean Francois, left, takes part in drills in November before practicing with defensive end Lawrence Guy on the campus of the Air Force Academy. The Patriots have always had a knack for getting production out of late-round draft picks and undrafted free agents. This season is no exception with unknown players like 2011 seventh-round draft pick Guy and Jean Francois, a seventh-round pick in 2009, both making key contributions.

Unexpected contributions

New England excels at getting production from 'glue guys'

By KYLE HIGHTOWER

Associated Press

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — The Patriots have had a knack for getting sometimes unexpected production out of late-round draft picks and undrafted free agents during Bill Belichick's tenure.

From Tom Brady to Julian Edelman to Danny Amendola to last season's Super Bowl star James White, the list is long and lauded.

This season has been no exception with 2011 seventh-round draft pick Lawrence Guy and Ricky Jean Francois, a seventh-round pick in 2009, each providing contributions that have helped solidify New England's defensive line that has thrived during the second half of 2017.

The Patriots want to make life as miserable as possible for Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Nick Foles in Sunday's Super Bowl.

It puts the spotlight on Guy and Jean Francois, with Deatrich Wise (concussion) and Malcolm Brown (foot) both dealing with injuries.

Guy said experiencing his first Super Bowl has validated the path he took to get here.

"My journey's still going," he said. "I wasn't thinking about this a couple of years ago. I was just thinking about doing what I could do to play harder and harder, study film and stay on the team and contribute. But now I'm blessed to be here."

Guy started 15 games during the regular season at either defensive tackle or defensive end, and he's started both playoff games.

Jean Francois appeared in six games after signing with the Patriots in early November and started New England's AFC championship game win while playing defensive end.

"My appreciation is high for this," said Jean Francois, 31, who came to the Patriots following stops in San Francisco, Indianapolis, Washington and Green Bay. "I'm having fun. Clowning around with my teammates. Sitting down, watching film. Just appreciating the moment."

Jean Francois will be getting his second shot at

a Super Bowl. He was on the 49ers team that lost to Baltimore in the Super Bowl to cap the 2012 season. It's an opportunity he acknowledged he wasn't sure he'd get again.

"It's crazy. I never thought there'd be a point when I'd be starting in the AFC championship game again," Jean Francois said.

"I started in one for the Colts (2014 season), but the next year I was gone. But to be on a team like this and be able to start again in a short period of time. That shows you how much trust and how much I had to do to be in that position."

Since starting with Green Bay in 2011, each of Guy's subsequent stops in Indianapolis and San Diego ended with him getting waived. He had his longest run after being picked up by Baltimore in 2014. He played 11 games for the Ravens in 2014, and appeared in every game over the next two seasons.

The Patriots grabbed him in free agency last March, signing him to a four-year, \$20 million deal. He's had one of his best seasons so far, starting 15 games and finishing with a career-best 34 tackles and a sack.

Guy said he's never been deterred by the "ups and downs" he's experienced.

"It can happen at the beginning of your career, it can happen at the end of your career. But sooner or later you're probably gonna get waived here and there," he said.

Defensive coordinator Matt Patricia says Guy's attention to detail has allowed him to play several different positions in the Patriots' system. Patricia said Guy's been able to help not only against the run, but he's been able to transition "into a little bit more pass rush into the pocket and push and be up in the quarterback's face."

Even in his sixth season, Guy said he's tried to keep learning from older players around him.

"Everything I've gone through made me more of a man and made me better as a player," Guy said.

"To experience this type of week is great. It's a once-in-a-lifetime situation that you can never get back."



PATRICK SEMANSKY/AP

Eagles RB LeGarrette Blount won two Super Bowls with the Pats.

SUPER BOWL LII MATCHUP

By **BARRY WILNER**

Associated Press

Matchups for the Super Bowl between the Philadelphia Eagles and New England Patriots:

When the Eagles (15-3) have the ball

The Patriots must be wary of a balanced offense that tore apart Minnesota, which has a better overall defense than does New England. Forget about **Nick Foles (9)**, right, being a backup quarterback; his postseason performances, particularly in the NFC title game, have been strong.

Foles will try to get TE Zach Ertz (86) involved early; he was unstoppable against the Vikings. Indeed, the Eagles have three tight ends they are comfortable going to, including Brent Celek (87) and Trey Burton (88). That places an onus on safeties Devin McCourty (32), as reliable as any player at that position in the league, and Patrick Chung (23).

Philadelphia's wideouts supposedly were a weakness heading into the season. Not quite. Alshon Jeffery (17) is a clear No. 1 target with excellent hands and the ability to get open all over the field. That frees up vastly improved Nelson Agholor (13) and veteran Torrey Smith (82). They will challenge the Patriots' solid cornerbacks, Malcolm Butler (21) and Stephon Gilmore (24).

New England's defensive backs will need a bolstered pass rush, something the Patriots manufacture with a variety of players, from Trey Flowers (98) to Geno Grissom (96) to Lawrence Guy (93) to rookie Adam Butler (70) to the rejuvenated LB James Harrison (92). Philly is most staunch at center with Jason Kelce (62) and right tackle with Lane Johnson (65), both All-Pro.

One thing the Eagles are sure to try to keep New England's offense on the sideline is getting Jay Ajayi (36), former Patriot LeGarrette Blount (29) and rookie Corey Clement (30) some open space for runs. New England LB Kyle Van Noy (53) figures to have a busy day unless Philly falls behind.

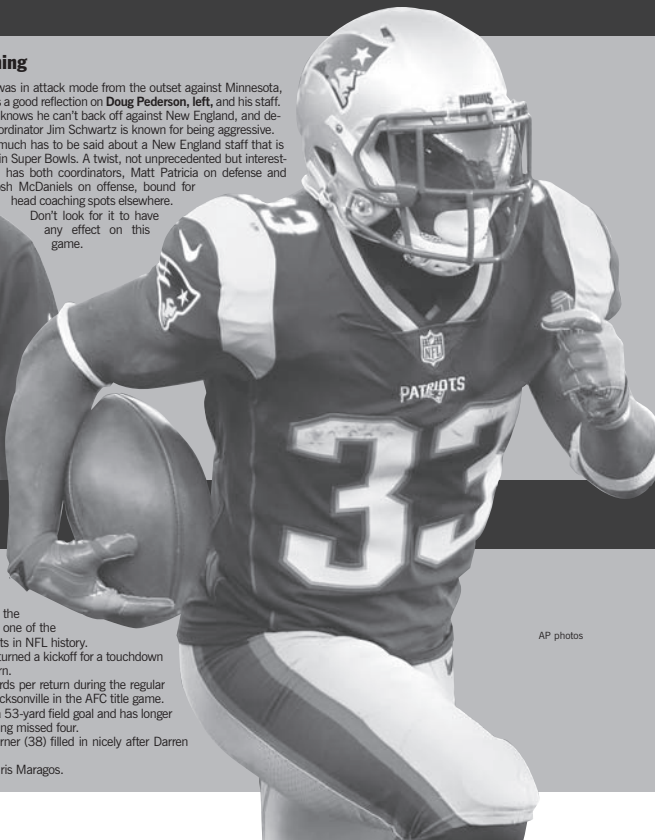


Coaching

Philly was in attack mode from the outset against Minnesota, and that's a good reflection on **Doug Pederson**, left, and his staff. Pederson knows he can't back off against New England, and defensive coordinator Jim Schwartz is known for being aggressive.

Not much has to be said about a New England staff that is 5-2 in Super Bowls. A twist, not unprecedented but interesting, has both coordinators, Matt Patricia on defense and Josh McDaniels on offense, bound for head coaching spots elsewhere.

Don't look for it to have any effect on this game.



Special teams

Patriots K Stephen Gostkowski (3) rebounded from a rough 2016 to have a strong season. He made 37 out of 40 field goals in the regular season, going 4-for-4 on kicks of 50 or more yards. He is one of the league's most clutch kickers and is third in career postseason points in NFL history.

Dion Lewis (33), right, is the only player in this game to have returned a kickoff for a touchdown this season. He ranked fourth in the NFL with 24.8 yards per return.

Amendola is also a threat on punt returns. He averaged 8.6 yards per return during the regular season, including a long of 40 yards, and had a big one against Jacksonville in the AFC title game.

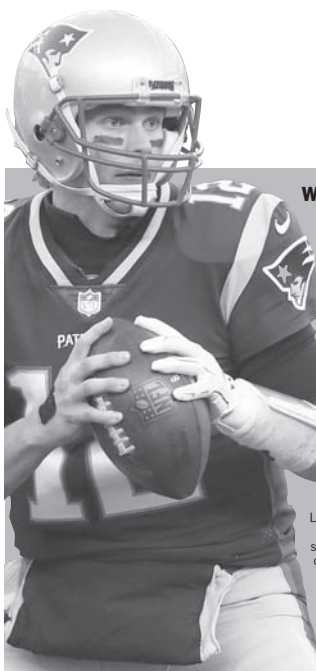
Philadelphia's Jake Elliott (4) set a postseason club record with a 53-yard field goal and has longer range than Gostkowski. But he is less reliable on extra points, having missed four.

P Donnie Jones (8) ranked 17th in net average and Kenjon Barner (38) filled in nicely after Darren Sproles was injured. Barner's best punt return went for 76 yards.

Coverage units are solid despite losing special-teams captain Chris Maragos.

AP photos

SUPER BOWL LII MATCHUP



When the Patriots (15-3) have the ball

Tom Brady (12, left), has won five Super Bowls, four times as game MVP. Never mind that he is 40, he's playing as if he's in his prime and will test Philadelphia's versatile defense from the outset.

Oddly, while Brady led the NFL with 4,577 passing yards, no QB who paced the NFL in that category has won the Super Bowl in that season, going 0-5. Brady couldn't do it, and the others were Peyton Manning, Rich Gannon, Kurt Warner and Dan Marino.

It's essential that the Eagles get in Brady's face throughout. That means DLs Fletcher Cox (91), the best defensive player in this postseason, Brandon Graham (55), rookie Derek Barnett (96) and former Patriot Chris Long (56) must apply pressure. That's doable but not easy against an offensive line without any stars, but with plenty of skill. LT Nate Solder (77) and C David Andrews (60) are the key guys up front.

Philly must be alert not only for all of Brady's targets — WRs Brandon Cooks (14), **Danny Amendola (80)**, **right**, Chris Hogan (15), RBs James White (28) and Lewis — but for Lewis and White in the running game.

The Eagles' secondary, often criticized for its inconsistency, has gotten very stingy in the playoffs. Of course, CBs Ronald Darby (41), Jalen Mills (31) and **Patrick Robinson (21)**, **below right**, haven't faced this kind of offense.

Perhaps most critical among all matchups is whether All-Pro TE Rob Gronkowski (87) has recovered from a concussion. His confrontations with veteran S Malcolm Jenkins (27) could be telling.



Rosters

Philadelphia Eagles				
No.	Name	Pos	Ht	Wt
4	Elliott, Jake	K	5-9	170
7	Sudreft, Nate	QB	6-6	227
8	Jones, Donnie	P	6-2	221
9	Foles, Nick	QB	6-4	243
10	Hollins, Mack	WR	6-4	221
13	Agholor, Nelson	WR	6-0	198
14	Johnson, Marcus	WR	6-1	204
17	Jeffery, Alshon	WR	6-3	218
18	Gibson, Shelton	WR	5-11	191
21	Robinson, Patrick	CB	5-11	191
22	Jones, Sidney	CB	6-0	191
23	McLeod, Rodney	S	5-10	195
24	Graham, Corey	S	6-0	196
26	Watkins, Jaylen	WR	5-11	194
27	Jenkins, Malcolm	S	6-0	204
28	Smallwood, Wendell	RB	5-10	208
29	Blount, LeGarrette	RB	6-0	250
30	Clement, Corey	RB	5-0	220
31	Mills, Jalen	CB	6-0	191
32	Douglas, Rasul	CB	6-0	209
36	Alayi, Jay	RB	6-0	223
38	Barner, Kenjon	RB	5-9	195
41	Darby, Ronald	CB	5-11	183
45	Lovato, Rick	LS	6-2	249
47	Gerry, Nathan	LS	6-2	218
50	Braman, Bryan	DE	6-5	241
52	Means, Steven	DE	6-3	263
53	Goode, Naje	LB	6-0	244
55	Bradham, Nigel	LB	6-2	241
56	Grujir-Hill, Kamu	LB	6-2	220
55	Graham, Brandon	DE	6-2	265
56	Long, Chris	DE	6-3	270
57	Ellerbe, Dannel	LB	6-1	245
61	Wisniewski, Stefan	G/C	6-3	305
62	Kelce, Jason	C	6-3	295
65	Johnson, Lane	T	6-6	317
66	Beatty, Will	T	6-6	317
67	Wormack, Chance	G	6-2	323
72	Buttal, Halapoulivati	T	6-6	320
73	Seumalo, Isaac	G	6-4	303
75	Curry, Vinny	DE	6-3	278
79	Brooks, Brandon	G	6-5	335
82	Smith, Torrey	WR	6-0	205
86	Ertz, Zach	TE	6-5	255
87	Celek, Brent	TE	6-4	255
88	Burton, Trey	TE	6-3	255
91	Cox, Fletcher	DT	6-4	310
93	Jernigan, Tim	DT	6-2	288
94	Allen, Beau	DT	6-3	327
95	Kendricks, Mychal	LB	6-0	240
96	Barnett, Derek	DE	6-3	259
97	Vaesao, Destiny	DT	6-4	299
98	Qualls, Elijah	DT	6-1	321

New England Patriots				
No.	Player	Pos	Ht	Wt
2	Hoyer, Brian	QB	6-2	215
3	Gostkowski, Stephen	K	6-1	215
6	Allen, Ryan	P	6-2	220
12	Brady, Tom	QB	6-4	225
13	Dorsett, Phillip	WR	5-10	185
14	Cooks, Brandin	WR	6-0	189
15	Hogan, Chris	WR	6-1	210
17	Reedy, Bernard	WR	5-8	175
18	Slater, Matthew	WR	6-0	205
21	Butler, Malcolm	CB	5-11	190
23	Chung, Patrick	S	5-11	215
24	Gilmore, Stephen	CB	6-1	190
25	Rowe, Eric	DB	6-1	205
28	White, James	RB	5-10	205
29	Bademosi, Johnson	CB	6-0	206
30	Harmon, Duron	DB	6-0	205
32	McCourtney, Devin	DB	5-10	195
33	Lewis, Dion	RB	5-10	210
34	Burkhead, Rex	RB	5-11	219
35	Gilliespie, Mike	DB	5-11	219
36	King, Brandon	DB	6-2	220
37	Richards, Jordan	DB	5-11	210
38	Solden, Brandon	RB	5-11	220
45	Harris, David	LB	6-2	250
46	Develin, James	FS	6-3	255
47	Hollister, Jacob	TE	6-4	239
49	Cardona, Joe	LS	6-2	245
50	Grisby, Nicholas	LB	6-2	230
52	Roberts, Elandon	LB	6-0	235
53	Van Noy, Kyle	LB	6-3	243
55	Lee, Eric	DL	6-2	260
59	Flowers, Marquis	LB	6-3	250
60	Andrews, David	C	6-3	295
62	Thuney, Joe	G	6-5	305
68	Weddle, LaAdrian	OL	6-5	315
69	Mason, Shaq	OL	6-11	310
70	Butler, Adam	OL	6-11	300
71	Fleming, Cameron	OL	6-6	320
74	Croston, Cole	OL	6-7	310
75	Karras, Ted	G	6-4	305
77	Solder, Nate	OT	6-8	325
80	Amendola, Danny	WR	5-11	190
83	Allen, Dwayne	TE	6-3	265
85	Britt, Kenny	WR	5-7	223
87	Gronkowski, Rob	TE	6-6	265
90	Brown, Malcolm	OL	6-7	320
91	Wise, Deatrich	DL	6-5	271
92	Harrison, James	DL	6-6	242
93	Guy, Lawrence	DL	6-4	305
94	Jean Francois, Ricky	DL	6-3	313
96	Grisson, Geno	DL	6-2	265
97	Branch, Alan	DL	6-6	350
98	Flowers, Trey	DL	6-2	265

Intangibles

The Eagles have never won a Super Bowl; their previous NFL title was in 1960. They have that extra edge that perennial underdogs — even in home playoff games as the No. 1 seed — would carry. Their confidence is soaring after they tore apart the stingiest scoring defense in the league for the conference championship. New England probably doesn't need anything in this category. But the Patriots always seem to find some extra motivation, and it usually works.

AP photos



SUPER BOWL LII

Eagles having fun, not intimidated by Pats

Team clearly loose amid media frenzy

By ROB MAADDI
Associated Press

BLOOMINGTON, Minn.

Wrestling masks have replaced the dog masks.

The underdog Philadelphia Eagles are having fun with the media frenzy leading up to the Super Bowl against the New England Patriots. They're staying relaxed, loose and won't be intimidated by their opponent's incredible success.

Three-time Pro Bowl defensive tackle Fletcher Cox and All-Pro right tackle Lane Johnson on Wednesday donned masks that resembled the ones WWE star Rey Mysterio and other luchadores wear in the ring.

"This was a gift from Mexico so I can have super powers all week," Cox said about the green mask featuring an Eagles logo.

"I'm just having fun right now. We know why we're here. We can't come into this all uptight. You have fun when it's time to have fun and get serious when it's time to get serious."

Johnson and defensive end Chris Long pulled out German shepherd masks and wore them off the field and in their interviews after the Eagles beat Atlanta in the divisional round. The Eagles (15-3) were the first No. 1 seed to enter their first playoff game as an underdog.

The city, which has always had an underdog personality, embraced the masks. Johnson and Long then turned it into a charitable venture. They created underdog T-shirts that were sold with all proceeds going to the Philadelphia school district's not-for-profit arm.

The Eagles were underdogs again in the NFC championship game and routed the Vikings 38-7. They're in the same spot against the Patriots, who are 4½-point favorites on Sunday.

But these Eagles don't fear Bill Belichick, Tom Brady or New England's dynasty. Johnson called Brady a "pretty boy" and made it clear he's not bothered by the hype.

"I definitely respect him and all that he's done in this league," Johnson told The Associated Press. "I'm not going to go into the Super Bowl worshipping this man and make him more than what he is. No disrespect.

"As far as bulletin-board material, they can put it on their nightstands for all I care, in their bathrooms, I don't care. I don't



ERIC GAY/AP

Eagles defensive tackle Fletcher Cox wears a wrestling mask as he takes part in a media availability for the Super Bowl on Wednesday in Minneapolis. "This was a gift from Mexico so I can have super powers all week," Cox said.

think you need any motivation to play in the Super Bowl. They know that."

Brady and Belichick have led the Patriots to five Super Bowl titles, including two of the past three seasons.

Philadelphia players respect the duo's accomplishments, but aren't going into the game already defeated. Several players were part of a 35-28 upset win at New England in 2015. The Eagles were a losing team under Chip Kelly that season, but still went on the road and knocked off the 10-1 Patriots.

That won't matter when the teams meet for the Vince Lombardi Trophy. Still, it's a confidence-booster for some guys.

"I think when you've been playing for a long time, you've had games where you've played unbelievable players and unbelievable coaches," All-Pro center Jason Kelce said.

"To me, this isn't any different. These guys have been more consistent throughout the years, but this is the NFL. You play good players every week. There's good coaches you go against every week. I don't think you look at this any different than the fact that this is just another game. You see what they do really well and how you can defend it."



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SUPER BOWL LII

Eagles defenders say 'we match up well'

Beating Patriots, Brady two years ago gives Philadelphia confidence heading into Sunday

By ROB MAADDI
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — The Eagles needed touchdowns on a blocked punt, interception return and punt return to beat the New England Patriots the last time the teams met in 2015.

They don't think it'll take another set of unusual scores to win the Super Bowl.

Malcolm Jenkins, Fletcher Cox, Brandon Graham, Vinny Curry, Mychal Kendricks and Beau Allen are six key defensive players left from a team that upset the Patriots 35-28 at Gillette Stadium on Dec. 6, 2015. It was former coach Chip Kelly's next-to-last win before Philadelphia fired him later that month.

"I think we match up well," Jenkins said. "They've obviously got a great system, great offense, probably the best quarterback of all time, a great tight end, speedy receivers. They've got a real good scheme, and they isolate people, but if there's any defense out there that can match up with every single person, I think it's this defense, so we're looking forward to it."

Jenkins intercepted Tom Brady's deflected pass and returned it 99 yards for a touchdown to give the Eagles a 21-14 lead after they overcame a 14-0 deficit. They got a 24-yard TD return by Najee Goode off a blocked punt and Darren Sproles took a punt 83 yards for a score.

But the Patriots were missing Rob Gronkowski, Julian Edelman and Dion Lewis in that game. They'll see Lewis on the field 10 times around, and possibly Gronkowski if he recovers from a concussion.

"We have to play 60 minutes against them," Cox said. "What makes Tom Brady unique is he gets rid of the football so quickly, and he doesn't really make any mistakes. It's going to come down to us getting after them. It's about us, it's not about them."

Graham sacked Brady twice and hit him three other times the last time they played. He knows pressuring Brady without having to blitz is the key to success.

"If you can get to him with four, you're on the right track because Tom Brady is the GOAT (greatest of all time)," Graham said. "He's the man and everybody understands you've got to play him for 60 minutes, sometimes even longer if you go overtime. You've got to get after him, get him rattled, because he's the head of that team and everybody knows it."

The Eagles have the NFL's No. 1 defense against the run and were fourth overall in yards allowed and points allowed. They've stepped it up in the playoffs, giving up just 17 points to the Falcons and Vikings. One of those two TD drives was only 18 yards after a fumble. They haven't allowed a point in the second half.



PHOTOS BY CHARLES KRUPA/AP

Patriots quarterback Tom Brady sits on the turf after Eagles safety Malcolm Jenkins returned an interception 99 yards for a touchdown in the second half on Dec. 6, 2015, in Foxborough, Mass. Jenkins, Fletcher Cox, Brandon Graham, Vinny Curry, Mychal Kendricks and Beau Allen are six key defensive players left from a Philadelphia team that beat Brady and New England 35-28 in Foxborough that day. "If you can get to him with four, you're on the right track because Tom Brady is the GOAT (greatest of all time)," said Graham, who sacked Brady twice and hit him three other times in that game.

'They've got a real good scheme, and they isolate people, but if there's any defense out there that can match up with every single person, I think it's this defense, so we're looking forward to it.'

Malcolm Jenkins
Eagles safety

Eagles linebacker Brandon Graham sacks Patriots quarterback Tom Brady during Philadelphia's 35-28 victory in Foxborough in December 2015.

SOURCE: nflcommunications.com

By the numbers

10

Number of Super Bowls the Patriots have played in, an NFL record.

55; 3

The most (San Francisco in 1990) and fewest (Miami, 1972) number of points ever scored in a Super Bowl by one team.

12

Number of times in the past 13 Super Bowls the team wearing white jerseys won. As the home team, the Patriots chose to wear white. They are 3-0 in white in past Super Bowls.

SOURCE: AP; nflcommunications.com

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SUPER BOWL LII

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AP photo

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